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VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

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CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Volume I

Edited by
Richard J. Sommers
Ph. D.
Archivist-Historian

A special publication of the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

October 1976

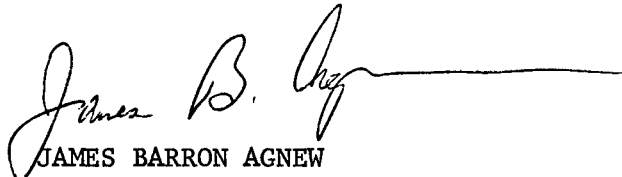
Preface

This publication, a collection of "Vignettes of Military History," represents the compendium of a series of individual papers started in 1974 which has been published by the staff of the Military History Research Collection primarily for reading by students and faculty members of the Army War College but which is enjoying wider reader interest.

The intent of the series has been to show brief glimpses of the human side of military history to the soldier and civilian. By this method we in the Research Collection hope to convince the reader that history is alive, exciting, appealing - a field deserving further study by career officers and civilians alike, both for its inherent interest and for its pertinence to their work and their lives. In the final analysis, the people who made history are human beings, not immortals or fanciful romantic figures from the past. Many faced and solved (or failed to solve) some of the same types of problems we face in our own lives and careers. Theirs are the stories of a few heroes, some villains, but mostly a lot of just plain folks.

Some of the one-page vignettes are humorous and others decidedly sober; however, all are based on fact. Hopefully, they will prove interesting and will stir your curiosity to look further into the events of the past relating to your profession or interests.

I would like to express my appreciation to all who had a hand in the development of this publication. We hope that its value to you will far exceed the collective effort involved in its promulgation, assembly, and production.


JAMES BARRON AGNEW
Colonel FA
Director

Introduction

The Military History Research Collection promotes the study of military history in many ways: primarily by making available source material but also by sponsoring historical lectures and conferences, by providing speakers to classes and historical meetings, by teaching courses, and by publishing historical material. One of the most popular MHRC publications is Vignettes of Military History.

The idea for Vignettes was suggested by Colonel Dandridge M. Malone of the Army War College faculty and was implemented by Colonel James B. Agnew, Director of the Research Collection. The first Vignette appeared, September 9, 1974, and succeeding numbers have come out fortnightly ever since. Members of the MHRC staff and other interested parties on post write these articles, based on their own studies and areas of interest, and the undersigned edits the series.

As Colonel Agnew makes clear in the preface, Vignettes are meant to alert military officers, soldiers, and civilians to the rich texture of military history. Great commanders and men in the ranks, American and foreign, in war and peace, in modern times and throughout ages gone before, provide the scope of the series. The vividness, excitement, interest, pertinence - indeed, the very humanness - of military history set the theme.

The articles have succeeded well. Staff, faculty, and students at the Army War College, to whom they are regularly distributed, and users of and visitors to the Research Collection, who can pick them up in the foyer of Upton Hall, have received the series enthusiastically. Other military installations and private parties off post have asked to obtain the material, too. The only complaint has been that each new Vignette was not regularly available outside of Carlisle Barracks.

This volume meets that need. It reprints the first fifty Vignettes and makes them available for Army-wide distribution. Now the series that has elicited such interest at Carlisle Barracks is being shared with other Army posts and personnel. The books may also be obtained by civilian historians and buffs.

Most readers will want to go through the Vignettes, one by one. Some users will, however, desire to focus on particular subjects, and many more readers will want to check back and relocate particular entries. To facilitate finding individual articles, five series of cross-references are provided in addition to the standard table of contents: topics; wars and time periods; historical personages; units, commands, and agencies; and contributors.

The editor cannot close his introduction without expressing his gratitude to Colonel Malone for suggesting the series; to Colonel Agnew for so actively supporting and promoting it; to his colleagues in the Research Collection and on post for contributing articles; and to the Administrative Section, especially Mrs. Judy Meck, for so conscientiously typing the Vignettes.


RICHARD J. SOMMERS, Ph. D.
Archivist-Historian

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US Army Military History Research Collection

"The Rebels Are upon Us"

9 September 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 1

SOURCE: R. K. HITNER TO MRS. H. HASTINGS, JULY 6, 1863, MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY (COPY IN MHRC).

THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN BROUGHT THE CIVIL WAR TO CARLSLE IN
EARNEST. CONFEDERATES OCCUPIED THE TOWN, JUNE 27-30, 1863, AND ON
JULY 1 THEY SHELLED IT AND BURNED THE BARRACKS. THE FOLLOWING LETTER,
WRITTEN JULY 6, VIVIDLY RECOUNTS CIVILIAN REACTION TO THE BOMBARDMENT
BY FITZHUGH LEE'S CAVALRY: "****I do not believe you have seen any very
authentic accounts of our bombardment here as the papers are not very
precise. All agree that had we fallen into the clutches of Savage
Indians we would not have been treated more barbarously. In the first
place we were surprised as the wary enemy advanced by a bye road. We
had all been up town, had tables spread in the market house to refresh
our weary men as they entered from their march from Harrisburg when
suddenly a cry was raised "The rebels are upon us!" The officers gave
orders calmly and citizens made the best of our way home. We had
scarcely reached ours and relieved the 37th N.Y. /Nat. Gd./ who were
drawn up by our door of their extra clothing, when a shell came whizzing
over our heads and for a time a furious fire ensued. The enemy were
drawn up beyond the mill on this St. Not until after this was a flag
of truce sent in demanding an unconditional surrender of the town.
Judge Graham Bowman & that clique advised compliance but thanks to
Gen. Smith we were able to say "No" to our insolent enemy. Too often
they had had their own way and now we were willing to see our homes
demolished and our lives endangered rather than surrender. Upon the
return of the flag the shelling commenced, not allowing us 5 min. to
reach a place of safety, though word was sent that our end of town
must be vacated. Up town we ran amid the firing, seeing and hearing
shells bursting & whizzing all around & about us. Such horrors we
never experienced. The old & sick carried from their beds through the
fiery shower, little children snatched from their slumbers - it was
a terrible sight. We went to Miss Egolf's cellar and remained there
through most of the night....The firing was continued at intervals
until near daylight when their ammunition gave out & off they went but
with a promise to return by 10 that morning and complete the work of
demolition. A great panic ensued and many who had not reached the
country that night went in the morning but fortunately that is the
last we have seen of the Rebs, save as prisoners. Many of our citizens
who were taken prisoners counted them and agree as to their numbering
3500. Stuart was with them but for some reason Fritz Hugh Lee /sic/ was
in command.***Don't you think we have been treated barbarously? If that
is civilized warfare and Southern chivalry we all pray our armies may
never reach such a pitch. The missiles used were mostly percussion
shells and made great havoc in numerous dwellings....We are now liv-
ing in darkness as our Gas works are partially destroyed and our beau-
tiful garrison is in ruins - save the frame house to the right of the
Captain's... We are beginning to shake off rebel dust & rust and waken
to civilized life again.***"

Contributed by Dr. R. J. Sommers



US Army Military History Research Collection

23 September 1974

No. 2

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

ARMY RELIEF OF CIVILIANS, 1874-1875

On a bright sunny day in July the S. C. Bassett family of Buffalo County, Nebraska, sat down to the mid-day meal. The sky seemed to darken and it was remarked that a squall might be approaching. Suddenly what sounded like hail first drop-dropped, rattled, then poured onto the roof and against the walls. On looking out, someone passed the cry of "Grasshoppers!" through the frame house.

In minutes the insects covered the earth to a depth of four to six inches. They moved through the grain fields, their feeding noises like a herd of cattle masticating. Corn stalks, even limbs, broke under their weight.

Quickly someone thought to throw bedclothing over the precious garden, but the hoppers ate not only through the blankets but into the subsurface onions and turnips. They chewed to ruin harnesses and munched off the grayness of weathered clapboards. Clubbed and stomped hoppers themselves were devoured by the horde. Creeks were stained with their excrement. Fish, turkeys and hogs gorged on them to the extent that, when butchered, their own flesh tasted of the insect.

After a few hours of feeding in Buffalo County, the cloud re-formed and moved on. In that summer of '74 great areas of the upper plains were stripped of vegetation. Panicked neighbors offered a bounty of fifty cents a bushel for dead grasshoppers and many extreme remedies were proposed, including concussion bombs. But only heavy rains were an effective large scale natural control, drowning them.

It was soon reported that the isolated civilian farmers in the Military Departments of Dakota, Platte and Missouri faced winter without food and fuel reserves. Relief societies were formed. Committees traveled to the East with appeals, and churches and individuals responded. Controversy arose over the intensity of this new suffering inflicted upon the already beleaguered dry land immigrants. Tales circulated of both unfed children and misappropriated donations, misrepresentations of discomfort.

By February 1875 conditions were desperate enough that, in response to a Congressional resolution, the U.S. Army Subsistence Department arranged a Federal relief exercise. General Alfred Terry in the hard-pressed Department of Dakota detailed eighteen officers to canvass the counties and seek out "all cases of actual suffering, and to prevent imposture." Bacon, flour, greatcoats, hats, shoes and boots were distributed. From headquarters in Omaha, General George Crook directed a similar program for the Department of the Platte. In all, that winter the Army issued 1,957,000 rations to 63,500 adults and 43,900 children at a cost of about \$150,000. And by 1881 the Army Signal Corps, in addition to its meteorological duties, manned locust control observation stations.

Written by Mr. John Slonaker

(Based on Everett Dick, Sod House Frontier, and documents in MHRC)



US Army Military History Research Collection

7 October 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 3

A Concise, Logical Model of Military Writing

In this age of verbal maelstroms, Pentagonese, and xeroxgraphy, permit us to offer a concise, logical model of military writing from the far simpler era of the American Civil War.

To Major General Early:

General: General Jackson desires to know why he saw so many of your stragglers in the rear of your division today?

Signed: A.S. Pendleton, A.A.G.

Dear General Jackson:

In answer to your note I would state that I think it is probable that the reason you saw so many of my stragglers on the march today is due to the fact that you rode in the rear of my division.

Respectfully,

Jubal Early
Major General

Contributed by Dr. B.F. Cooling

Source: The Adjutant's Call, Official Publication of the Louisville (Ky.) Civil War Round Table, #67, September 1974, files MHRC.



US Army Military History Research Collection

Ambition

21 October 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 4

A prominent Boston Tory in the American Revolution, after the battle of Bunker Hill, visited the Boston jail, where a number of American prisoners were languishing. Approaching one, a wounded lieutenant named Scott who appeared to be a man of some intelligence, he asked him how he had come to be mixed up with rebellion. The Tory, in a book published after the war, recorded the lieutenant's answer verbatim: "The case was this Sir! I lived in a country town; I was a shoemaker, and got my living by my labor. When this rebellion came on, I saw some of my neighbors get into commission, who were no better than myself. I was very ambitious, and did not like to see those men above me. I was asked to enlist as a private soldier. My ambition was too great for so low a rank; I offered to enlist upon having a lieutenant's commission, which was granted. I imagined myself now in a way of promotion: if I was killed in battle, there would be an end of me, but if my captain was killed, I should rise in rank, and should still have a chance to rise higher. These sir were the only motives of my entering into the service; for as to the dispute between Great Britain and the colonies, I know nothing of it; neither am I capable of judging whether it is right or wrong."

It turns out that Lieutenant Scott was a real person. American records show a Lieutenant William Scott of Peterborough, New Hampshire, wounded several times and captured at Bunker Hill. Everything the Tory said about him that can be checked appears to be accurate. But we also know, as the Tory did not, what happened to Scott after his interrogation. He was taken to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he escaped after his wounds healed by stealing a small boat. He rejoined Washington's army at New York just in time to be captured again, but this time he escaped by swimming the Hudson River, according to a newspaper account, with his sword tied around his neck and his watch pinned to his hat. He was ordered back to New Hampshire to recruit a company of light infantry, which he led against Burgoyne's invasion from Canada. By then a captain, he is mentioned in reports as having cut off Burgoyne's last effort to break out of the trap at Saratoga. Later he retired because his wounds pained him, but he spent the last year of the war on a privateer attacking British shipping. Ruined financially by the war, he lived in poverty until the War Department gave him a job with a surveying party in Ohio. When the party came down with "lake fever," Scott led them back to civilization, but a few days later, in 1796, he himself died. No one interviewed Scott a second time to ask him whether he had changed his mind about the American Revolution or whether, in 1775, he had been misquoted.

Contributed by Dr. John Shy

Peter Oliver, Origin & Progress of the American Rebellion (Stanford, 1961), and Jonathan Smith, Peterborough, New Hampshire, in the American Revolution (Peterborough, 1913).



US Army Military History Research Collection

4 November 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 5

Stonewall Retaliates

Lieutenant Thomas J. Jackson had been designated a "brevet major" for his performance during the Mexican War battles of Cerro Gordo, Contreras and Cherubusco. In October 1850 Lieutenant Jackson joined Captain (Brevet Major) William Henry French's Company E/First Artillery. Company E was located at Fort Meade, Florida, on the Peace River about 30 miles east-southeast of Tampa. Although the two men had previously been friends, animosity soon developed. French charged that Jackson "oversupervised." Jackson preferred charges, accusing French of engaging in unbecoming conduct with Julia, a nurse employed by French. In the following memorandum Jackson, suffering from weak eyes, requested that French furnish him clerical assistance in preparing additional court martial charges.

I have been on the sick report for about a month, and for some time back my eyes have been weak, and so much so since writing the accusations against you on the 13th inst as in my opinion to render it unsafe to use them either forwarding (sic) or writing. I am desirous that additional accusations against you should be forwarded by the Steamer which leaves Tampa Bay for N. Orleans on Thursday next, as in my opinion it is very important that they should accompany those already forwarded.

About twenty specifications which are for Conduct unbecoming an officer & a Gentleman, have been made out for some time, but owing to ill health have not been copied, and in their present condition ought not to be forwarded. . . And as I have no other certain means of getting them copied and soon as I deem the interest of the public service requires, I respectfully request that you will permit me to employ Corp'l Bruning or such other person as you may designate for the purpose of transcribing them.

Contributed by LTC Roy S. Barnard

From: Frank E. Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall, pp. 56-67.



US Army Military History Research Collection

18 November 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 6

"Meinertzhagen the Magnificent" (Dirty Tricks are Better!)

One of the least chronicled aspects of the combat actions of World War I concerned the fighting between the British and their colonial allies against the Germans in that little known theater, German East Africa. With a handful of German regulars, some farmer volunteers and black colonial troops, General Paul von Lettow Vorbeck eluded capture, avoided decisive defeat, and tied up allied forces totalling 130,000 which were vitally needed on the western front in 1917-1918.

Despite the ineptness of the British commanders pitted against him, a young British captain--an intelligence officer of Danish descent, Captain R. Meinertzhagen--came very near to being the German commander's undoing on several occasions.

Meinertzhagen was a master of the innovative, the unique, and the unexpected. Appointed Director of Intelligence for the British forces in "German East," the young captain developed a net of native agents which increased from 100 in 1914 to 3,000 by late 1916. One of his favorite intelligence collection techniques was the "DPM" (Dirty Paper Method). His agents visited German Officer latrines and "the material they brought back, though filthy, was invaluable" Maps, orders, and notes of considerable tactical significance were "sanitized" and used to alter British plans to the detriment of the Germans.

Meinertzhagen's most dangerous opposite number was an educated Arab in German employ, who supplied the Germans with considerable vital intelligence concerning British railway operations. To eliminate this threat to his dominance of the intelligence world in German East, Meinertzhagen, in his own handwriting, wrote the Arab agent thanking him for recent information supplied as a double agent, enclosed a sum of German marks and entrusted delivery of the message to his own most bungling agent. As would be expected, the spy was intercepted by the enemy and in typically efficient but ruthless fashion, the Germans executed the Arab, one of their best sources of information on British activities.

Captain Meinertzhagen left Africa in late 1916 due to illness but showed up again in 1918 in the Palestine front where he became a fast friend of the legendary "Lawrence of Arabia" and in the service of General Allenby continued to perpetrate his dirty tricks on the Germans and Turks.

Source: Brian Gardner, On to Kilimanjaro

Written by Colonel James Barron Agnew



US Army Military History Research Collection

Command Relationships

2 December 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 7

A commander's relationship with his subordinates is an important element in conducting war. If mistrust of competence and lack of mutual support - as rightly or wrongly perceived - are allowed to rankle, they can undermine the whole relationship and adversely affect military operations.

A good case in point occurred during the Civil War, when Major-General George B. McClellan adduced the enfeebled condition of his cavalry as one reason for not pursuing the Confederates from Maryland into Virginia. Everything he said about his mounted arm was true: it was understrength, exhausted, and debilitated after the arduous campaigning of the past four months. Yet so much had the government lost confidence in him, due largely to his constant pretexts for not advancing for over a year now, that it put little faith in any objection he raised. President Lincoln, indeed, felt moved to respond himself to the general's complaint about the cavalry:

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON CITY
OCTOBER 24 (25), 1862

MAJOR-GENERAL McCLELLAN:

I HAVE JUST READ YOUR DISPATCH ABOUT SORE-TONGUED AND FATIGUED HORSES. WILL YOU PARDON ME FOR ASKING WHAT THE HORSES OF YOUR ARMY HAVE DONE SINCE THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM THAT FATIGUES ANYTHING?

A. LINCOLN

A far different technique of command was practiced by McClellan's counterpart in Gray, R. E. Lee. The laurels Lee would win during the last three years of the Civil War did not come his way in 1861. His initial campaign west of Allegheny Mountain that year ended in failure. Editors ridiculed him as an ineffectual old "Granny," and even some of his own subordinates openly denounced his conduct of operations. Lee, however, did not allow the junior officers' criticism to influence his assessment of them. The following account makes clear how, in his command relationships, he sought only the good of his country, not personal adulation:

NOT LONG AFTER HIS WEST VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN, (LEE) WAS RECOMMENDING A CERTAIN OFFICER FOR PROMOTION, WHEN A FRIEND URGED HIM NOT TO DO SO, ALLEGING THAT THIS OFFICER WAS ACCUSTOMED TO SPEAK VERY DISPARAGINGLY AND DISRESPECTFULLY OF GENERAL LEE. THE QUICK REPLY WAS, "THE QUESTION IS NOT WHAT HE THINKS OR IS PLEASED TO SAY ABOUT ME, BUT WHAT I THINK OF HIM. I HAVE A HIGH OPINION OF THIS OFFICER AS A SOLDIER, AND SHALL MOST UNQUESTIONABLY RECOMMEND HIS PROMOTION, AND DO ALL IN MY POWER TO SECURE IT."

(Historical illustrations of this principle contributed by MG DeWitt C. Smith.

Sources: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies and J. William Jones, Personal Reminiscences...of Gen. Robert E. Lee.)



US Army Military History Research Collection

16 December 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 8

"Just a Few Words to Let You Know"

Although the history of World War I has filled many volumes, very little has been written from the common soldier's point of view--certainly nothing of the scope of Bell I. Wiley's Life of Johnny Reb and Life of Billy Yank. However, a synopsis of the doughboy's experience in France is contained in the following single letter from a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, boy, George H. Allbright:

July 31, 1918

Dear Frances,

Just a few words to let you know that I am still on earth. We are right in front of the big-guns having dinner and a very good one at that. We the guns go off you dropped half of it. but pick it up before you our through. We have the Germans going that fast that we are all played out trying to keep up with them. Our Reg. is doing very nice work. We had a few days of rain and this is some place when it rains, we all ways fine a place in the woods to camp so Old Fritz does not shells us to much. Last night he put a few over and our guns gave him a shelling most all night for those few shells. Simonetti comes up with their trucks quite often. he has a very hard job. they work day and night getting supplies up to us. I have all kinds Germans trophies with me if I can get them home. Well this will be all for this time Give my regards to Kit and all the rest.

Yours very truly

Geo.

Hdq. Co. 112th U.S. Inf.
American E.F.
Via New York

Contributed by Michael J. Winey

SOURCE: Winey Coll., MHRC



US Army Military History Research Collection

30 December 1974

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 9

Contributed by Dr. Richard J. Sommers

BACK FROM THE DEAD

Generalship, Civil-War style, entailed more than distant, impersonal management of force. Inclination, circumstance, and command techniques of the age often made generals leaders as well - literally leaders, who went into the thick of the fray with their men. To the non-career rank and file who fought the war, such personal leadership - occasionally setting examples, more often sharing the danger, most of all just participating - counted for much. Sometimes, in fact, it was the decisive element in averting disaster, reversing the course of fighting, gaining victory. William S. Rosecrans, for example, played a key role in personally rallying his army for a successful last stand along the Nashville Pike during the Battle of Stone's River, and the story is well known of how Phil Sheridan converted debacle into decisive success at Cedar Creek. Sheridan, indeed, was so inspiring a personal leader that at Five Forks he aroused even the dead to leap up and take part in storming the Confederate fortifications.

The benefits from such personal leadership were great, but so were the drawbacks. Talent exposed is talent risked, and the mortality among the high command of both sides - the natural leadership classes of the army, indeed of society itself - was frightful. Out of 425 Confederate generals, 77 were killed in action, among them two army commanders and five corps commanders. The Yankees, too, lost heavily: two army commanders, three corps commanders, plus 42 other generals out of a total of 583. The rates would be even higher if colonels who lost their lives while holding generals' commands were included.

Yet occasionally - almost miraculously - the cup passed from a general apparently destined to die in battle. Such an officer was Joshua L. Chamberlain, who led his brigade of the V Corps into heavy fighting in the thick woods and small fields around Lewis' Farm, southwest of Petersburg, Virginia, March 29, 1865. As he and his men charged the Southern works, a bullet slammed into his left chest, right at the heart. The general reeled and fell, senseless, on his horse's neck. Three times already in the war he had been wounded, and now surely he was killed. His division commander, Charles Griffin, rode up and put his arm around the fallen leader. Thirty months of arduous campaigning had forged close bonds between bluff old Regular Griffin and promising young volunteer Chamberlain, and the senior officer was clearly moved. "My dear General," Griffin cried, "you are gone." "Yes, General," replied the supposed corpse, "I am gone," and, saying that, he went - went, bleeding man on a bleeding horse, back into battle to rally his wavering troops, to eventually drive the Graycoats from their defenses, and to win a brevet as major-general. The governorship of Maine, the presidency of Bowdoin College, and 49 more years of life lay ahead of this presumed "dead man." Only after fighting ended did it become apparent that in passing through his horse's neck and an orderbook and mirror in his coat pocket, the fatal bullet was slowed and diverted sufficiently to only knock him unconscious and not to penetrate into the heart. But to an astonished Charles Griffin and his men, it looked as if the brigadier had come back from the dead to lead them to victory.

Source: The third paragraph is based on Joshua L. Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies.



US Army Military History Research Collection



13 January 1975

THE U.S. ARMY IN SIBERIA, 1918-1920

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 10

--Contributed by Mr. John Slonaker

To a coterie of elderly veterans recent references to Vladivostok evoke a host of ancient images.

August 1918. General William S. Graves received a coded telegraphic order "to take the first and fastest train out of San Francisco and proceed to Kansas City, go to the Baltimore Hotel, and ask for the Secretary of War." There Graves was told to lead 9,000 doughboys into Siberia. Advance elements of the Philippine-based 27th and 31st Infantry arrived in Vladivostok on 15 Aug.

Why were they in alien Siberia, rather than on the Western Front? Lieutenant Lawrence Butler was probably as puzzled as his superiors, including President Wilson, whose motives have been variously described as complex, hesitant, subtle, anti-Bolshevik, anti-Japanese and anti-German.

Lt. Butler's orders for 24 June 1919 were not complex - assume command of a 72-man detachment of Company A, 31st Infantry at Romanovka, east of Vladivostok. The unit guarded the narrow-gauge railroad's approach to Suchan mines, which were sought by the Japanese, managed by Czarists, and worked by dissident Bolshevik laborers. (Armored trains, a major tactical weapon in the trans-Baikal civil war, were fueled by Suchan coal.) Arriving on the night of the 24th, Butler worried that the camp was dangerously positioned. At daybreak 1,000 Bolshevik irregulars crawled through tall grasses and opened fire from the rim of the hills overlooking the camp. Butler was immediately hit, his lower jaw shot away. Two men cut through the enemy ambush to seek reinforcements six miles down the line. Despite his intense suffering, Butler continued to direct the defense with hand signals. Wounded automatic riflemen maintained their positions amidst the storm of maiming dum-dum bullets and finally the miners withdrew. Of the 72, 24 had been killed or mortally wounded and 20 survived their wounds, including Butler, who was found by his friends smoking a cigarette in a Vladivostok hospital. A twisted handkerchief, tied over his head and beneath his shattered jaw, served as a lower lip.

General Graves rigorously avoided any retaliatory offensive. International and local alliances were too unstable. In fact, a boundless animosity existed between the Americans, who, because they were politically uninvolved, enjoyed the luxury of high principles, and their Czarist allies, "cutthroat" Cossack atamans. For example: 1. In January 1919, Americans at Habarovsk protected Cossacks from the wrath of Ataman Kalmikov, whose command they had deserted. 2. When Cossacks in an armored train assaulted a village in November 1919, killing all Jews and stuffing them in the ice, Lt. Paul Kendall and his platoon sergeant captured the train by discharging grenades in the engine compartment. 3. In a photograph of the U.S. camp at Drosdov, one sees a half-naked Russian girl, age three or so, running from the cook's tent with his gift to her - a loaf of bread.

The Army, an institution of direct action, was no doubt uncomfortable when employed as an instrument of tenebrous foreign policy. But, as a collection of individual wills and ideals, the Army acquitted itself admirably.

Source: Published and mss. accounts by Siberian veterans on file in MHRC.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Dr. B. Franklin Cooling

January 27, 1975

No. 11

DERIVATION OF MILITARY TERMS - EVER WONDER WHENCE THEY CAME?

MANY MILITARY TERMS, NOW IDIOMATIC, ORIGINALLY DESCRIBED ACTUAL EXPERIENCES WHICH A FIGHTING MAN MIGHT FACE. THE FOLLOWING QUOTATIONS FROM AN ARTICLE IN ARMS GAZETTE ARE CASES IN POINT:

"Keeping-Your-Powder-Dry"

A must for any soldier or hunter who aimed to secure his full quota of victims feathered or otherwise. Well waxed cartridges for the military and a well made, air-tight powder flask for the hunter being the order of the day.

"Hoist-With-His-Own-Petard"

A petard being a vase or urn shaped vessel which loaded with all manner of explosives was affixed to a castle door or drawbridge. Lighting the short fuse the sapper would try to make a quick dash for safety. However, the mixture being so unstable the chances were that the poor chap went up with his own petard . . . hence the old saying!

"Flash-in-the-Pan"

All too common event when using a flintlock, when powder in the pan only is ignited leaving the main charge intact. Usually brought about through a blocked vent, damp powder or high wind dispersing the priming powder.

"Shot-My-Bolt"

Another reference to the crossbow; meaning that I've just fired my last arrow.

"Draw-a-Bead-On"

Long bow as well as crossbow this time. At one time it was common practise to have a small bead mounted on the bow or prod as an aiming aid.

SOURCE: Derek E. Johnson, "Whence They Came," Arms Gazette, January, 1975.



US Army Military History Research Collection



10 February 1975

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 12

--Contributed by John Shy

WHAT HAPPENED?

OR, WHOSE VERSION DO YOU BELIEVE?

Military history is no better than the evidence it rests on. Trying to determine exactly what happened at Lexington Green on 19 April 1775 illustrates the point perfectly.

Captain John Parker, who commanded the militiamen engaged in the small but vitally important first battle of the American Revolution remembered it this way:

...on the nineteenth instant, in the morning, about one of the clock, being informed, that there were a number of the regular officers riding up and down the road, stopping and insulting people as they passed the road, and also informed that a number of the regular troops were on their march from Boston, in order to take the province stores at Concord, I ordered our militia to meet on the common in said Lexington, to consult what to do, and concluded not to be discovered, nor meddle, or make with said regular troops, if they should approach, unless they should insult or molest us; and upon their sudden approach, I immediately ordered our militia to disperse and not to fire. Immediately, said troops made their appearance, and rushing furiously on, fired upon and killed eight of our party, without receiving any provocation therefor from us.

But Ensign Jeremy Lister of His Majesty's 10th Regiment of Foot was also there, and he saw it--or at least told it--differently.*

...the country people began to fire their alarm guns, light their beacons, to raise the country. However, to the best of my recollection about 4 o'clock in the morning, being the 19th of April, the five front companies was ordered to load, which we did. About a half an hour after, we found that precaution had been necessary, for we had to unload again, and then was the first blood drawn in this American Rebellion. It was at Lexington when we saw one of their companies drawn up in regular order. Major Pitcairn of the Marines, second in command, called to them to disperse, but their not seeming willing he desired us to mind our space, which we did, when they gave us a fire, then run off to get behind a wall. We had one man wounded of our company in the leg...also Major Pitcairn's horse was shot in the flank. We returned their salute, and before we proceeded on our march from Lexington I believe we killed or wounded either seven or eight men.

*Lister's account has been repunctuated for clarity. Both versions appear in The Nineteenth of April, 1775 (Lincoln, Mass., 1968).



US Army Military History Research Collection

24 February 1975

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 13

The Brash Captain

On 3 October 1917 General Pershing visited the 1st Infantry Division during their training in France to witness a battalion demonstration. Afterwards Pershing "just gave everybody hell." He said, "The division didn't show much evidence of training, had made poor use of its time, and had not followed directives."

As Pershing dismissed the Division Commander and Chief of Staff with contempt, a junior officer "stung at the manifest injustice," and at what he considered the unfairness of Pershing's appraisal, began to speak. When Pershing turned away, the young officer "mad all over" put his hand on the general's arm and overwhelmed him with a torrent of facts.

While his fellow staff officers were horrified and felt that the young captain would be fired, he himself had no regrets. He said, "All I can see is that I might get field duty instead of staff duty, and certainly that would be a great success."

Contrary to the expectations of his messmates, the young captain later became General Pershing's aide. His name was George C. Marshall.

--Contributed by LTC Roy S. Barnard

From Forrest C. Pogue Education of a General, pp. 151-153.



US Army Military History Research Collection



March 10, 1975

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 14a

BORDER WAR - AMERICAN STYLE

GERMAN IMMIGRANTS WHO LEFT THE WARTORN RHENISH PALATINATE FOR AMERICA DID NOT ALWAYS FIND PEACE IN THE NEW WORLD EITHER. ONE SUCH PERSON WAS JOHAN A. FORNE, WHO SETTLED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF WHAT IS NOW HANOVER, PENNSYLVANIA, IN 1734. THE REGION WAS THEN KNOWN AS "CONEWAGO SETTLEMENTS," OR "DIGGES CHOICE," NAMED AFTER JOHN DIGGES, WHO HAD TAKEN UP LAND THERE UNDER A MARYLAND WARRANT. NOT ONLY MARYLAND BUT PENNSYLVANIA AS WELL CLAIMED THE AREA. THEIR CONFLICTING PRETENSIONS OVER THIS "DISPUTED LAND" PRODUCED MUCH TURMOIL, LED TO HARASSMENT RATHER THAN PROTECTION FROM THE LAW, AND CREATED A VOID OF AUTHORITY THAT BRED LAWLESSNESS. TO CORRECT THE SITUATION, PENNSYLVANIA, IN THE SPRING OF 1746, SENT THOMAS COOKSON, SURVEYOR OF LANCASTER COUNTY, TO INFORM DIGGES OF THE ROYAL ORDER DESIGNED TO SETTLE THE VEXING BOUNDARY DISPUTE IN FAVOR OF THE PENNS. HERR FORNE ACCEPTED PENNSYLVANIA'S RESULTING TITLE TO THE REGION, BUT DIGGES DID NOT. FORNE'S LETTER TO COOKSON, APRIL 25, 1746, RECOUNTS, IN QUAIN IDIOM, THE ENSUING AFFRAY:

Worshipful Sir: May it please your worship we cannot but acquaint your worship what has happened here since your departure from us. Yesterday as the 24th of April, Mr. Digges sent a Deputy Sheriff out of Maryland for to arrest Matthew Ulrich and Nicholas Forne [Johan's son]. He took them two until my house where I asked the Sheriff by what authority he rested these men, if they owed any money. If they owed money I would be bound for their appearance at court, but if he could not tell me no more cause as this, vis.: that those men should give their bonds to Digges for the land or depart from the land. The two people have taken up their lands these five years ago from the Hon'r Propr's land office in Philadelphia and it was surveyed for the same. I ordered upon them this two men as Matthias Ulrich and Nicholas Forne to return to their habitation whereupon the Sheriff and Digges' son made resistance and the Sheriff drew his sword upon me and we drew our swords and was a-going in upon them, whereupon they fled to their horses and so ran away and so was the way we got ridden of our new guests. Now is our humble request to you for you to come up speedily and to look into this matter and settle it that we may have rest and live in peace and quietness as his Majesty's Subjects and not be troubled forever. For if this matter is not rectified and we do not get help speedily we must help ourselves and should it be with our last drop of blood, for I am well assured that we will not be put upon by no Digges that ever lived under the sun. So wishing that you may soon come over, I have no more to add but remain your

Humble & Ob't. Servant

Adam Forne

SUCH DISPUTES WERE NOT DEFINITELY SETTLED UNTIL THE DRAWING OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE, 1765-1768.

Contributed by Mr. Fredric D. Forney, AWC Class of 1975



US Army Military History Research Collection



March 10, 1975

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 14b

PICKETT'S PICKETS' CHARGE

ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 17, 1864, PICKETT'S CONFEDERATE DIVISION SUCCESSFULLY ADVANCED ITS PICKET LINE ON THE BERMUDA HUNDRED FRONT, BETWEEN RICHMOND AND PETERSBURG, AGAINST FEEBLE OPPOSITION BY RAW PENNSYLVANIA TROOPS. THE FOLLOWING LETTER, WRITTEN A WEEK LATER BY A SOLDIER OF THE 18TH VIRGINIA, VIVIDLY RECOUNTS THE OPERATION: "Since my last letter to you I can say with the utmost regard for truth, that I have literally passed through an ordeal of fire and water. On last Thursday evening the 17th inst. the Lieutenant temporarily assigned to the command of Co. "C" was very actively perambulating our Company grounds and occasionally thrusting his military looking cranium into our huts and very solicitously and to one not well acquainted with, perhaps, nervously inquiring, if each man had his complement of cartridges to wit: forty. This remark en passant might perchance lead to the impression, that the aforementioned Lieutenant was actually conversant with the peculiar importance of having the required number of cartridges on the occasion referred to. I will state for fear of misapprehension that he was at the time in blissful ignorance of the object for which the above inquiries were instituted. It was not long, however, after all deficits in ammunition had been supplied, before it "leaked out" about the camp and on the picket line, that our skirmishers were to advance and take the Yankee picket line in our front and to inflict any damage which in each man's discretion, he might choose to administer to the insolent and unsuspecting foe. I was not on picket on the evening alluded to, but did not escape a participation in the charge on the enemy on this account as our entire regiment was ordered out to support the line of pickets, in order to ensure the capture of the enemy's line. We left our pits about 8½ o'clock PM and in the lapse of five minutes we had possession of both the Yanks and their rifle pits. We did not find it necessary to fire often as we advanced steadily and for a short time silently upon the "blue coats." The troops engaged in the affair were composed of a large part of Steuart's and Hunton's Brigades - the object being to consummate the straightening of our lines from the James to the Appomattox rivers...to re-occupy the entire line as originally laid out... by General Beauregard. A few minutes previous to the order being given for our men to advance, the enemy seem to have had some idea that we intended to attack them - but they did not form their surmise in sufficient time to reinforce their line... Many amusing incidents transpired on the night of the attack. The Yankees laid close to their pits and yielded to us with but a very faint exhibition of resistance. The few that escaped left everything behind such as guns, haversacks, overcoats, blankets, oil-cloths, & etc. They might have inflicted considerable injury on us if they had stood manfully in their pits and fired upon us as we approached but they seemed to be perfectly confused and panic stricken - this of course accounts for the small loss which we have happily sustained. We had in our regiment two killed and three wounded...one of our Company missing, supposed to be a prisoner..."

Contributed by LTC Thomas G. Adcock, AWC Class of 1975



US Army Military History Research Collection



March 24, 1975

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY No. 15

"Mission Impossible" (circa 1805)

or:

How to Make A River Crossing Without a Casualty!

In 1805, Napoleon and the Grande Armee had encircled and resoundingly defeated a less-than-illustrious Austrian Army under General Mack at Ulm, in the Danube Valley.

Desirous of pursuing the remnants of the Austrians fleeing eastward to link-up with their advancing Russian allies, Napoleon feared an attack upon his rear from the direction of Vienna if he failed to occupy the city and block any movement of another Austrian army from Italy. The seizure of Vienna, involving the crossing of the wide and deep Danube, was a high-risk venture. There were few bridges, and those were heavily defended by Austrian artillery and mined for explosion if breaching appeared imminent.

With circumspection, Napoleon chose two of his audacious marshals to carry out the operation. He charged Jean Lannes, a capable Corps commander, and Joachim Murat, his own brother-in-law and Cavalry commander, with the mission of seizing the Danubian crossings to insure the safety of his lines of communications.

Murat and Lannes, seldom the most cooperative of associates, nevertheless collaborated on an innovative approach to gain a bridgehead for the French. Attiring themselves in their most resplendent uniforms, the two Marshals rode boldly up the approaches to the bridge at Spitz, drawing near to the bedazzled old Austrian Commander, Prince Auersberg. As they neared the defenders, Lannes inquired whether the bridge commander was aware that an armistice had been signed between Napoleon and the Hapsburg monarch. Confused, Auersberg announced that he would check this report. In the meantime, French troops commenced advancing onto the bridge.

An alert Austrian sergeant detected this incursion and warned Auersberg to fire on the French, but Murat turned upon the Austrian commander with the haughty remark: "Is this your famous Austrian discipline, where sergeants countermand the orders of generals?" Humiliated, Auersberg placed the observant sergeant under arrest, while the French advance guard continued to move across the span. To deter Austrian artillery fire at point-blank range, Lannes sat upon the cannon and in nonchalant fashion assured the Austrian general that the French troops "...are not advancing at all but...are marking time to keep their feet warm."

Before Auersberg could recover his wits, the French troops had disarmed the Austrians and had control of both banks of the Danube. No shot was fired by either side, and Napoleon's flanks were secure.

Written by Colonel James Barron Agnew

Source: A. G. Macdonell, Napoleon and His Marshals



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

7 April 1975

--Contributed by Dr. John Shy

No. 16

A BICENTENNIAL MONDAY-MORNING QUARTERBACK, OR TWENTY-TWENTY HINDSIGHT ON LEXINGTON & CONCORD

On 18 April 1775, General Thomas Gage sent 800 of his best infantry to seize the military stores and political leaders said to be at Concord, Mass. The column ran into light resistance at Lexington, half way to its objective, heavier opposition at Concord, and was decimated, suffering more than 200 casualties, before getting back to Boston, having failed to accomplish its mission. Naturally, historians have had some critical comments on the operation. More valuable are eye-witness opinions, and one of special value came from the pen of Lieutenant Frederick Mackenzie, an old soldier in spite of his lowly rank, who would rise to serve as deputy adjutant-general of British forces in America during the Revolution. His opinion, entered in his diary on the morning after the debacle, deserves our attention. As usual, there is enough blame for everyone:

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF: "General Gage...had no conception the rebels would have opposed the King's troops in the manner they did. But the temper of the people...made it evident to most persons, that opposition would be made..."

THE COLUMN COMMANDER: On crossing to Charlestown neck during the march out, the troops "were obliged to wade, halfway up their thighs, through two inlets... This should have been avoided if possible... In order to make up for the time they had lost, the commanding officer (LTC Francis Smith) marched at a great rate..." At the first action, at Lexington, "Colonel Smith was not then in front, owing to the troops marching so fast, and his being a heavy man." In general: "An officer of more activity than Colonel Smith, should have been selected for the command..."

THE TROOPS: Upon coming under fire, "the troops returned their fire, but with too much eagerness, so that at first most of it was thrown away for want of that coolness and steadiness which distinguishes troops who have been inured to service... Most of them were young soldiers who had never been in action, and had been taught that everything was to be effected by a quick firing. This ineffectual fire gave the rebels more confidence, as they soon found that notwithstanding there was so much, they suffered but little from it."

AND THE OFFICERS: "The contempt in which they (the troops) held the rebels, and perhaps their opinion that they would be sufficiently intimidated by a brisk fire, occasioned this improper conduct, which the officers did not prevent as they should have done... Many houses were plundered by the (British) soldiers, notwithstanding the efforts of the officers to prevent it. I have no doubt this inflamed the rebels, and made many of them follow us farther than they would otherwise have done."

Source: The Diary of Frederick Mackenzie (Harvard, 1958).



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Dr. Richard J. Sommers

April 21, 1975
No. 17

THE SWORD IS MIGHTIER THAN THE PEN

FOR OVER FIVE MONTHS U. S. GRANT HAD TRIED TO CAPTURE VICKSBURG. FOR OVER FIVE MONTHS NATURE, LOGISTICS, AND CONFEDERATE RESISTANCE HAD THWARTED HIM. NOW IN EARLY APRIL, 1863, HE PREPARED TO LAUNCH A NEW DRIVE DOWN THE RIGHT BANK OF THE MISSISSIPPI, THEN CROSS INTO THE ENEMY'S REAR. THIS PLAN WAS SUFFICIENTLY DANGEROUS UNDER OPTIMUM CONDITIONS; ADVANCE WARNING OF IT TO THE CONFEDERATES MIGHT PROVE FATAL. GRANT, THEREFORE, WAS FURIOUS WHEN THE PRO-SOUTHERN NEWSPAPERS IN OCCUPIED MEMPHIS BEGAN DIVULGING IT. HE MOVED SWIFTLY AND EFFECTIVELY AGAINST THEM:

Apl. 9/63

Maj. Gen. S. A. Hurlbut, Comdg. 16th Army Corps, Gen.:

Suppress the entire press of Memphis for giving aid and comfort to the enemy by publishing in their columns every move made here by troops and every work commenced. Arrest the Editors of the Bulletin and send him a prisoner, under guard, for his publication of present plans [to move] via New Carthage & Grand Gulf.

I am satisfied that much has found its way into the public press through that incorrigibly [sic] gassy man Col. [Josiah] Bissell of the [1st Missouri] Eng. Regt. I sent him to you thinking he could not do so much harm there as here. His tongue will have to be tied if there is anything going on where he is which you don't want made public. I feel a strong inclination to arrest him and trust to find evidence against him afterwards.

Very respectfully,
U. S. Grant, Maj. Gen.

THE CORPS COMMANDER PROMPTLY CARRIED OUT THESE ORDERS, AND FOR NEARLY TWO WEEKS THE CITY'S PAPERS WERE CLOSED DOWN. ONLY ON APRIL 23 DID GRANT ALLOW THE BULLETIN TO RESUME PUBLICATION, THIS TIME UNDER MUCH TIGHTER CONTROLS. THE VOLUBLE BISSELL, ON THE OTHER HAND, ESCAPED THE FATE CONTEMPLATED FOR HIM, BUT, SIGNIFICANTLY, LESS THAN TWO MONTHS LATER, HE TENDERED HIS RESIGNATION IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY AND WAS ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE SERVICE. GRANT, MEANTIME, WENT ON TO CONDUCT ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT CAMPAIGNS IN AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY AND FULLY SECURED ALL HIS OBJECTIVES.

Sources: Grant to Hurlbut, April 9, 1863, manuscripts, MOLLUS-Mass. Coll., MHRC; Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, ser. 2, v. V, p. 476 and ser. 1, v. XXIV, pt. 3, p. 226.



US Army Military History Research Collection

"LAW AND ORDER" vs. "BREAD OR BLOOD!"

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Mr. John Slonaker



5 May 1975

No. 18

The Depression of 1873 was four years old. In New York City 30,000 people spent their days at soup kitchens and cold nights as "revolvers" in police stations. "Dumpies" built huts of scrap wood and picked over garbage heaps in San Francisco. Cumberland, Maryland, miners were living on dried roots, berries, and corn meal mush. July of 1877 was typically hot and humid when the tinder and oratory of railroad strikes flash-fired through urban America.

The Great Strike began as a refusal by firemen to accept the Eastern rail pool's 10% wage cut. In a matter of hours all the occupational brotherhoods of the Pennsy, Erie, and New York Central joined the B&O freight shutdown. When local police and railroad "special agents" were unable to drive the strikers from the yards and depots, militia units were called. At that point the battle leapt the confines of a one-industry conflict between capital and labor. Long-simmering grievances were taken before the court offist, rock, club, torch, and pistol. The very poorest citizens - slum boys, unemployed "tramps," recent immigrants, blacks, canal men, miners, and millmen - burned, looted, and waged war on the establishment and its guardians in Baltimore, Reading, Buffalo, Chicago, St. Louis, and, most violently, Pittsburgh.

The U.S. Army was preoccupied with Nez Perce Indians and Mexicans. Generals Sherman and Sheridan were in Yellowstone on a "reconnaissance" when President Hayes responded to state pleas by ordering Colonel W. H. French to Martinsburg, W. Va., and General Winfield Scott Hancock to Baltimore with U.S. regulars. Marines were called from Norfolk to protect the Treasury. The grateful Northern and Union Pacific transported eastward to Chicago and St. Louis elements of the 22d Infantry, under LTC Elwell Otis, and Colonel Jefferson Davis's 23d. Federal arsenals in Pittsburgh and Jeffersonville, Ind., were reinforced by the few available Atlantic Division troops.

Surprisingly, the arrival of 3,000 regulars coincided with the end of violence. By then over 100 people had been killed (half of them in Pennsylvania), an unknown number of wounded had been dragged from the turmoil by friends, and several million dollars of industrial property destroyed. Why had this chaos ended without a single shot being fired by the U.S. Army? Had the mob, many of its members drunk on stolen liquor, lost its sense of rage? Were the militia and police, unlike the Federals, identified with the monied class against whom the crowd sought to vent its wrath? Did President Hayes carefully time the introduction of regulars into the melee? Were the rioters intimidated by the Army's aura of discipline and firm leadership? Or, as a broader thesis, had the new immigrant poor absorbed the nationalism abroad in expanding America? At a time when such disparate institutions as state militia and socialist parties cloaked their *raison d'etre* in a mantle of national intent (see "National Guard" and Edward Bellamy's "Nationalist Societies") - in such an era, did the citizenry view the Army as agent of a dispassionate government, unaligned in the war between capital and labor?

Regardless of the reasons for the intervention's success, a precedent of lasting consequence had been established.

Source: Several books and public documents on file in MHRC.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

May 19, 1975

No. 19

MARCHING TO OMAHA

Who says Americans do not like a good parade and other such military things? Consider those wonderful people in Omaha, who in 1892 took a real shine toward a national drill competition their city was hosting. National encampments for organized militia companies were annual events held throughout the country. This was a time to display skills they had worked to perfect in between gatherings. Participating units from as far east as Washington and west to Denver were there: Sealy Rifles of Galveston; Indianapolis Light Artillery; McCarth Light Guards of Little Rock; Chicago Zouaves; and the Branch Guards of St. Louis, to name but a few. The encampment provided the social event of the season. Ladies competed in providing a vast array of pleasantries for the visitors during the week. Local carriages were adorned with the colors of favorite units. Gay colors, easy chairs, even pianos soon gravitated to unit areas in tent city at the fair grounds. The highlight of the week was a spirited sham battle. Over 30,000 people paid admission to witness the event that pitted Regulars of the 2d Infantry against militia units. The battle reached a high pitch at center field with artillery, gatling guns, and individual weapons consuming hundreds of pounds of powder and thousands of blank cartridges. The citizens liked the show. It was noisy and colorful, and no one was hurt. The University of Nebraska cadets entered drill competition for the first time this year. Nebraska had a new ROTC instructor who wanted to perk up interest and thought national competition would do the trick. The cadets did not place in the Grand National, as competition from seasoned militia units was overpowering. However, on Saturday, with competition under their belt, the cadets were more than ready. They finished the 45 minute maiden drill in 23 minutes and did not miss a step. The ROTC instructor, Lt. John J. Pershing, reported to Washington, "Co A, University Cadets took part in National Competitive Drill at Omaha in June and won 1st Prize in the Maiden Class--\$1500." In 1896, after their lieutenant moved on and long before World War I brought him national prominence, the cadets named their group "Pershing Rifles." The Pershing Rifles remain alive and well to this day with associated competitive drill squads on college campuses across the country.

--Contributed by LTC H. K. Bartron,
AWC Class of 1975



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

June 2, 1975
No. 20

THE VIEW FROM GHQ AND THE WORM'S EYE VIEW TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO

One of the most fascinating and important aspects of war is the way high-level and low-level events intersect and interact. No better example of this kind of interaction exists than the events of June, 1775, two months after the outbreak of open warfare between the British government and American rebels in Massachusetts.

The Continental Congress in back-to-back resolutions on 14-15 June appointed George Washington to command American forces then besieging the British army in Boston and directed that companies of riflemen be recruited and marched from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania to the Boston area. Printed in the journals of the Congress, these resolutions look routine, with nothing to indicate that their consequences were of world-historical importance.

Congress was called in 1774 not as a government but merely as a consultative body--a convention of provincial representatives. But the decision to "adopt" the army of New Englanders at Boston set in motion dynamic processes. In other words, a "continental" army was created before there was a government to which it could be responsible, and widespread fears of uncontrolled military power forced Congress to become more than it was meant to be; in a matter of months it assumed the powers of a national government, as much to provide civilian control of the new army as for any other reason.

But high-level decisions were mere words without grass-roots implementation. Carlisle, Pennsylvania, was one of the first communities to respond to the Congress's call for riflemen. James Chambers (32), son of the founder of Chambersburg, and William Hendricks (21) were commissioned captains and quickly raised their companies from the frontiersmen of the Cumberland Valley. Hendricks, by all accounts a fine natural leader, led his ninety men out of Carlisle on 13 July. After 23 days and over 400 miles of marching, Hendricks' company was among the first to join the New Englanders, and thus transformed that force, at least symbolically, into a true Continental Army. Hendricks would not survive the year, dying in the snow-blinded assault on Quebec 31 December, but he and his Carlisle riflemen had helped to change the course of history.

Contributed by Dr. John Shy, with the considerable help of Henry J. Young, "The Spirit of 1775," John and Mary's Journal, no. 1 (March, 1775).



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY 16 June 1975 No. 21

"BUT THEY WON'T DANCE"

After graduating from West Point, in July 1840, Brevet Second Lieutenant Richard S. Ewell, of the First United States Dragoons, was ordered to report to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

"Carlisle Barracks was commanded by Captain E. V. Sumner, a soldier of great experience, one to whom the service was home and family, meat and drink. He was a stern disciplinarian, an exacting drill master but a fair and just commanding officer.

* * * * *

"Captain Sumner gave his young officers a party at which were gathered the wit and beauty of the Cumberland Valley. Dick was annoyed because there was no dancing. . . . /He stated/, ' . . . The young ladies here are too puritanical to dance, though they have no objection to a little flirtation and gossip. I had not a very high opinion of the place from the very first. No place could be much with two Presbyterian churches and but few inhabitants to share the qualities which such places of resort always impart to those who frequent them.

"There are some very pretty women among them, and quite the first circles, too. If it were not for an insurmountable prejudice I have to anything which has the smallest claim to be called Dutch, I should fall in love with some of their pretty faces. . . ."

Lieutenant Ewell was soon ordered to report for duty with Company A at Fort Wayne, Cherokee Nation.

--Contributed by LTC Roy S. Barnard

Source: Percy Gatling Hamlin, Old Bald Head (General Richard S. Ewell) pp. 12-13



US Army Military History Research Collection

AN AMERICAN APPROACH TO NATIONAL DEFENSE **VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY**

Contributed by Dr. B. Franklin Cooling

June 30, 1975

No. 22

Americans have traditionally taken a cavalier approach to their own defense. Witness the letter sent to Secretary of the Navy William C. Whitney in 1885, by an anonymous well-wisher and now in Navy Records in the National Archives.

Oakland, July 10, 1885

Dear Sir,

A short while ago I saw by the paper that you offered a reward for the best plans for a new war-vessel. Keeping the reward in views (I would rather keep it in my pocket), I make the following suggestions: For the steel-plating on ordinary steamers, the regulation, army hardtack may be substituted. The great imperviousness of this to water, and the immense resistance it offers to all attempts to break it, are too well known to need any comment. The vessel must be landed high and dry on terra firma, and the masts being removed, a large brick oven built around it. The sides of the steamer must then be covered about one inch thick with the dough, and a fire built under the oven when the dough has become sufficiently hardened, the vessel is to be launched and made ready for service. I guarantee that the hard-tack plating will protect the ship from any serious injury.

The offensive side must be carried on in an entirely different manner from what it is now. The ordinary army mule must be brought into service. The power of this demure-looking animal's hind feet is amply immense. This is the part that is to do the work of destruction; but, as his hind feet would be of no use without the rest of him, it is necessary to have the whole animal. A small oblong raft, just large enough to hold the mule, his feet being at the corners, must be coated similarly to the vessel. This raft, four long wires having attached to it, one at each corner, is to be lowered into the water with the mule, to whose tail another wire has been attached on it. The current, which, of course, must be running from you to the enemy, will carry the raft to the other vessel. By means of the four wires you can so manage the raft that the mule's hind feet will be nearest the enemy. As soon as the raft bumps against the enemy's ship, the wire attached to the animal's tail must be pulled, when he will begin to strike out with his rear feet, of course kicking in the sides of the vessel. Should the mule be struck by shot, his natural toughness, and long experience in lessening the effect of blows merely by shaking his skin (a sleight-of-skin trick), will serve as a protection.

For coast defenses, I would suggest that, by act of Congress, all people within a certain distance from the coast be compelled to keep Limburger cheese in their house for about a month. They may begin with a small quantity and increase it daily until they have become accustomed to the odor. At the end of the required time, a great quantity of the cheese should be made, and spread at short intervals along the coast. If this will not drive away any vessel that would come within "nose-shot," so to speak, then let the nation have the country, and we will retire to the North Pole."



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

July 14, 1975
No. 23

On Assessing Your Enemies' Capabilities (It All Depends Upon Your Point of View)

Kaiser Wilhelm and the German General Staff on the eve of World War I in August, 1914, envisioned a short and victorious offensive against the Allies by the violent execution of the supposedly infallible "Schlieffen Plan." In his General Order, published on 19 August, "Kaiser Bill" conveyed his apparent disregard for the fighting capabilities of the Army of "Perfidious Albion." He arrogantly directed: "It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies. . . upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valor of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English and walk all over General (Sir John) French's contemptible little army."

But the "Old Contemptibles" would not be walked over! Only a week later, a German Infantry Company Commander in Kluck's First Army, jotted these remarks in his diary: "Then they apparently did know something about war, these cursed English, a fact soon confirmed on all sides. Wonderful, as we marched on, how they had converted every house, every wall into a little fortress: the experience no doubt of old soldiers gained in a dozen colonial wars. . . ."

The four division BEF had no small part in spoiling Moltke's master design and forcing the Germans into a retreat away from Paris in early September, thereby ending German hopes for a victory "on the cheap."

Submitted by COL James B. Agnew

SOURCES: Horne, Source Records of the Great War, Vol. II, p. 136; Bloem, The Advance from Mons, p. 91.



US Army Military History Research Collection

A Voice from White Plains, 1776

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY



July 28, 1975

No. 24

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BATTLE FOR NEW YORK CITY ENDED IN BITTER DEFEAT. THE SUMMER AND FALL OF 1776 SAW WASHINGTON'S ARMY IN RETREAT AGAIN AND AGAIN AS THE BROTHERS ADMIRAL LORD RICHARD HOWE AND GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HOWE COMBINED THEIR BRITISH FORCES AGAINST THE PATRIOT ARMY. FIRST LONG ISLAND, THEN BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, LOWER MANHATTAN, UPPER MANHATTAN, WHITE PLAINS, AND FINALLY ALL NEW YORK WERE GIVEN OVER TO THE SEASONED BRITISH AND GERMAN REGULARS AS THE UNDISCIPLINED AND UNSKILLED (AND MANY TIMES DOWNRIGHT COWARDLY) COLONIALS RETREATED WITHOUT MUCH STRONG RESISTANCE.

A YOUNG PATRIOT WROTE A LETTER TO HIS MOTHER DURING THIS SERIES OF DEFEATS AND RETREATS WHICH HELPS TO CONVEY TO US TODAY A LITTLE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE PATRIOTS IN THEIR FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

October 26, 1776

Dear Mother

A small group of us come to the white plains last night with the General. we marched all day arrived here midnight the general could tell by the stars [He obviously believed the General could do no wrong.] Tom shot a rabbit the only food we had since we left Bronks. i done some thing awful bad when we arrived i was so hungry we took the man chicken. the woman of the house forgave us and said a prayer for the war to be over soon. the man was real mad maby because we woke him up [sweet young innocence] the General is staying in the house below the hill the woman from the house come up today and fixed my hand when jonnie feet get better he will go home. i will mis him are officer told us to day they expect a battle soon i hopenot i get scared [He was willing to tell the truth.] tell father to keep the cow in the cellar where it will be safe i will be home to help with the plowing [an example of loose discipline and the attitude of the patriots who felt they could come and go as they pleased... or perhaps he believed it would be all over by spring!] we are not aloud to have fires General W. is very good to us to morrow he will go farther north.

GO FARTHER NORTH GEORGE WASHINGTON DID BUT HE LEARNED MUCH FROM HIS RETREAT THROUGH LOWER NEW YORK, AND TWO SHORT MONTHS LATER HE AND HIS SMALL ARMY MASTERFULLY ROUTED THE HESSIANS AT TRENTON. IT IS A WONDER, HOWEVER, THAT MORALE OF ANY SORT WAS KEPT UP BY THOSE RETREATING BOYS. PERHAPS THERE WAS SOMETHING IN GEORGE WASHINGTON WHICH DID COMMAND CONFIDENCE EVEN IN THE FACE OF DISASTER.

The letter is signed: Your loving son
Elijah

--Submitted by Michael J. Winey

SOURCE: Winey Coll., MHRC



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Dr. Richard J. Sommers

August 11, 1975

No. 25

NEW HORIZONS

GOING OFF TO WAR WAS THE GREAT EXPERIENCE IN THE LIVES OF MOST SOLDIERS IN THE FEDERAL AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES. RESPONDING TO THE FIRST CALLS TO ARMS, FIGHTING FOR CAUSES BELIEVED RIGHT, FEELING THE CAMARADERIE OF SHARED DANGER WERE ALL PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE. SO, TOO, WAS THE BROADENING OF HORIZONS WHICH THE WAR CAUSED. MOST SOLDIERS ON BOTH SIDES WERE FARM BOYS WHO HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY TRAVELLED BEYOND THEIR RURAL LOCALITIES, NOT SEEN A GATHERING LARGER THAN A COUNTY FAIR. FOR THEM TO GO OFF TO A BIG TROOP RENDEZVOUS IN THE STATE CAPITAL AND THEN TO JOIN TENS OF THOUSANDS MORE MEN FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY IN A FIELD ARMY WERE NOVEL AND IMPRESSIVE EXPERIENCES. THE SOLDIERS READILY SENSED THE INTEREST AND IMPORTANCE OF WHAT THEY SAW AND DID, AND IN LANGUAGE HOWEVER HALTING THEY RECORDED THEIR EXPERIENCES TO SHARE WITH HOMEFOLKS AND TO REMIND THEMSELVES IN LATER YEARS - SHOULD THEY SURVIVE - OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED. ONE SUCH BOY WAS PRIVATE WILLIAM REEDER OF THE 20th INDIANA. FRESH FROM HOOSIER FARMLANDS, HE SERVED BRIEFLY ON GARRISON DUTY IN MARYLAND AND THEN MOVED TO ONE OF THE MAJOR WAR ZONES, THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA, IN SEPTEMBER, 1861. THE GREAT NORTHERN STRONGHOLD THERE, FORT MONROE, WAS A MARVEL TO HIM. HAD HE BEEN A PROFESSIONAL MILITARY ENGINEER, HE WOULD HAVE SPOKEN OF ITS RAMPARTS AND FOSSES, EMBRASURES AND CASEMATES. SUCH TERMS, THOUGH, WERE UNKNOWN TO HIM, YET HE FOUND HIS OWN WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE MIGHTY WORK IN A LETTER HOME, SEPTEMBER 26, 1861: It is with pleasure that write you on this preasant occasion. I am well and enjoying myself finely on Virginia Shore*****In the first place I will give you A little discription of our trip. We left Cockeysville about three oclock in the afternoon and Arrived in Baltimore and Bordered A steam Boat and was on our way by seven Oclock. We had A pleasant trip. The evening was clear calm and Moonlight and the seanery grand. Every body was ancious to see all they could and consequently they all crowded on deck*****When I got up in the morning the sun was high and shining bright with a slight Brease that made it very pleasent. I had not been up very long before we come in site of the Bockade and the Fort wich made a splended site in the Distance*****The Fort is of an Enormous sise. There is an emence wall all round it and a Channel of water all round it on the out side. The wall is full of loop holes and cannon at every one. They are as they can be so as to be worked. Thoes cannon that I speak about are inside of Boom proof works. Then on top of the wall there is cannon strung all around of the largest kind. It beats all. It allmost impossible fore such A fort to ever be tacking [taken] no matter how large the forse. Besides the cannon on the fort and in it there is there is some about 14 and 16 feet long stationed along the waters edge. They are big enoug for A man to crall in and take a snooz. Besides all theas they have two or three hundre cast and laying in the yard ready for shipment. They are all of A large sise and balls and Bumshells by the thousands. I tell you it made me open my eyes to see such sites.

SOURCE: W.C.H. REEDER PAPERS, MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION ARCHIVES



US Army Military History Research Collection

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE'S VACATION



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY August 26, 1975
Contributed by Mr. John J. Slonaker No. 26

Bonneville. An image of salt flats; a whispering pencil with sharp aim on the horizon; the aroma of innovation and risk, both corpus and capital: all an appropriate legacy for Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville, U.S. Army, adventurer.

Well into the 20th century the Army encouraged its officers to experience the rejuvenating wilderness. For example, AR 605-115, dated 1923: "Absence under a permission to hunt or fish will not be counted against the annual leave allowance. . ." In the 19th century officers were occasionally granted more than a year's absence from duty to face the unknown. John C. Fremont is probably the best known explorer excused from duty. However, his case rested upon precedent such as the Bonneville outing.

Students of Western history encounter Bonneville not only as a regimental commander but also as a fur trapper and explorer. His father, Nicolas, was a learned Parisian revolutionary. With Napoleon's ascension to power (1799), Nicolas's home was broken into, his newspaper suppressed, and himself jailed. Good friend Tom Paine, international republican, escorted Mme. Bonneville and her children to New Rochelle, N.Y., Nicolas following later. Son Benjamin, through Paine's influence, won admission to newfledged West Point and graduated in 1815. His tour with the 7th Infantry in the Old Southwest generated interest in the West.

Exactly how and why Bonneville arranged a two-year leave of absence in 1831 is unclear. CG Alexander Macomb's extant instructions indicate the captain was expected to report on the warlike condition of Indian tribes. He may also have been charged with spying on British settlements in the Northwest. However, the War Dept. provided no funds for the expedition; instead, his fur-trapping prospectus lured N.Y. financiers. Bonneville left Fort Osage, 1 May 1832, with 110 men under contract. Twenty wagons, rarely seen in the trans-Missouri, were pulled to South Pass along what was to become the Oregon Trail. Old mountain men sneered at this newcomer, who established camp on the Green River, "Ft. Nonsense" to the veterans.

Bonneville remained in the Rockies from Aug. '32 to Aug. '35, overstaying his leave by almost two years. As anticipated by the experienced trappers whose footsteps Bonneville's men had dogged through beaver country, his venture was a commercial failure. And, although assistant Joe Walker led a party into

Calif., Bonneville himself failed to penetrate to foreign Pacific regions. Even the Salt Lake and its flats, about which he was curious, were never visited.

Upon returning to Washington in Sept., 1835, Bonneville disabused the Army of his rumored death, only to discover that he had communicated too seldom (once)

with Washington to remain on the officer rolls. When he applied for readmission, 17 7th Infantry officers petitioned against him. Gen. Macomb seems to have supported the Frenchman, who, while awaiting Congressional action, labored over a

journal on his years in the wilderness. That fall Bonneville visited John Jacob Astor's "plush parlors" in N.Y. There he met his destiny in the person of

Washington Irving, author. Irving was taken by Bonneville's story--so much so that he agreed to write an account based on the explorer's manuscript. Out of

this literary partnership came The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A. and immediate fame for the officer. The book, interestingly, served as the model

for Jessie Benton Fremont when she polished John's popular Report of the Exploring Expedition, 1843.



US Army Military History Research Collection

THE BUGLE

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by LTC Robert W. Black



September 8, 1975

No. 27a

The word "bugle" is an obsolete term for a wild ox or buffalo. The first hunting horns (ancestors of the bugle) were made of the horns of these animals. The armies of Gideon and Saul may have made the initial use of bugles. It is known that Roman Legions responded to them. During the dark ages the bugle fell from use. It came back into military service with the German Jagers during the Seven Years War (1756-1763). Regulation bugle calls for the British Army were written about 1793 by the great Austrian composer Franz Haydn. Many of our calls are of French influence.

Originally the American Army used the French "L'extinction Das Feux" ("lights out") for taps. General Daniel Butterfield of the Army of the Potomac did not like the French taps, so one night in July, 1862, at Harrison's Landing, Virginia, General Butterfield and Brigade Bugler Norton created the American "Taps." The French Army in turn adopted this American version in 1932.

Sir Walter Scott, Alfred Tennyson, and Rudyard Kipling have written of the bugle, but a conversation between a young officer and his Colonel during the early days of the Civil War best reflects the soldiers' love for the instrument:

"Colonel, the horn has blowed for dress parade."

"Sir, if I ever again hear you call that bugle a horn I will put you under arrest."

The first speaker was John S. Mosby; the second was Fitzhugh Lee, who later in the war would pay a visit to Carlisle Barracks--with bugle and torch.

SOURCES: Boatner, Military Customs and Traditions; Heintz, Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations; Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants.



US Army Military History Research Collection



THE BUGLER

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Mr. John Cornelius

September 8, 1975

No. 27b

THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT IS DRAWN FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY ONE OF NAPOLEON'S MEN IN THE 8TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, ARMY OF ITALY, ON JULY 30, 1807. IT WOULD INDICATE THAT AT LEAST SOME ASPECTS OF MILITARY LIFE ARE EVER WITH US:

One day last June I was on duty as a bugler at San Vito, and while I was bugling afternoon sick-call, a guy called Lacogrie, a doughfoot in the elite company, and a kind of overall brute who thinks a lot of his muscles and how well he can handle a weapon, came up to me. I had even done him a favor not long ago in some mess that had got him in the clink for having killed another doughfoot at Savorgnano. He rewarded me for my trouble, this Lacogrie, by coming up to me, boozed to the gills, and had the gall to want to fight because I had got him out of some bar by bugling sick-call. I told the moron to go you know where and how. Then some more hasty words got both our danders up, and he came to land me one. I was only too ready to take him up on this, and with the mouth of my bugle I handed him two good smashes right in the face, so that there were two outlines stamped by my bugle right on his kisser. He was so shook up at what I had done to spoil his map that he got a lot madder. I saw him just going to fetch a stone, and in a trice I was on top of him to keep him off that stone. Then I hammered away at that puss of his, which got all bloody, and I was just going to haul him to a canal hard by when a doughfoot who had been watching what we were up to, without taking any sides, finally separated us, and in three minutes they got Lacogrie away. He was really licked and practically ga-ga. Then I returned to my tour of duty and went on blowing sick-call. The story spread all over the garrison. They all complimented me for licking that Lacogrie, the ugly pockmarked spook, because I had mauled his face, blacked both his eyes and his nose to boot. After sick-call, he came around to look for me and show me how I had remodeled his appearance. I was pretty sure we would have to settle it with sabers after he made a pretty strong statement: "In just one hour," he said, "you won't be eating bread any more." By this he meant he had made up his mind to kill me. I took him up on this. I wasn't really scared of him because I thought I could match him both in skill and courage. We had gone through enough together in the armory and on the battlefield. We had had the same teachers. So I got word to two sturdy lads, Chany and Champion, and we mosied over to the duelling place. Lacogrie soon arrived with another doughfoot. There would be no palaver, we would just duel. (I said to Chany) "I can handle this, buddy; I'm not afraid of that huge bastard. I'm going to tan the hide right off him for the sake of that poor guy he killed just because he didn't know how to defend himself." Lacogrie said: "Come on! Hurry up! Let's duel!" There we were, old buddy, right at that second of rage when you don't stop to think, and when you are forced to show how many guts you have, and face up to the danger, and when you are both geared to trounce each other. We got behind a hedge with our sabers drawn and started to feel each other out.... Then our witnesses came up and separated us. They warned us that the adjutant was on the way with four men on guard duty, and just then I head Antoine's voice saying: "Aha! There they are, the comedians! Now I'm just going to show you how to fight!"

Tr. by John Cornelius from Ma vie militaire, 1800-1810, by Jacques Chevillet.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

22 September 1975

No. 28

"IT'S A HELL OF A LOT SAFER"

OPERATION HUSKY, THE INVASION OF SICILY, WENT SMOOTHLY FOR UNITS WHICH CAME ASHORE FROM LANDING CRAFT. THE TROOPS WHICH MADE THE ACCOMPANYING AIRBORNE ASSAULT DID NOT FAIR AS WELL. ON 10 JULY 1943, THE TROOP-CARRYING AIRCRAFT FLEW OVER THE ISLAND. NERVOUS FRIENDLY ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNNERS, UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THE STRAYING AIRCRAFT, COMMENCED FIRING. LTG, THEN LTC, YARBOROUGH WAS COMMANDING A BATTALION OF THE 504TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT. IN THIS INTERVIEW SEGMENT HE TELLS OF THE DECISION TO EXIT HIS AIRCRAFT.

The airplane that I was in was piloted by a young fellow who was obviously as scared as everybody else was and I went up to tell him that we were going to hook up then and if it got any worse, we were going to get out wherever we were as long as it was over land. So, I fought my way up through two rows of guys hanging there and found this young fellow scared to death, and I told him what I was going to do and he agreed because he wanted to get out of there and get back to North Africa if he could. So, I fought my way back to the door again and in the meantime the airplane on my left was shot down and hit the ground in flames and it had my S-2 in it and part of my communications section. Other airplanes were being hit. We could see around them and ours was hit several times with small stuff. And as I stood in the door ready to get out of there, the crew chief, lying on his belly, said, "Colonel, it's a hell of a lot safer out there than it is in here." And I said, "You're damn right and that's why we are going out, see."

--Contributed by LTC Roy S. Barnard

From Interview Number One, 28 March 1975, pp. 31-32, of Lieutenant General William P. Yarborough by Colonel John R. Meese and Lieutenant Colonel Houston P. Houser III, AY 75, as part of the AY 75 Senior Officer Oral History Program.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY October 6, 1975
No. 29

"THE OBLIGATION OF BEING AN OFFICER"

George S. Patton, Jr., was acutely aware of the history, tradition, and ethics of his profession. Long before he achieved fame himself in World War II, he reflected on what it meant to be an officer. On October 1, 1919, he shared with his subordinates in the 304th Brigade/Tank Corps at Camp Meade, Maryland, his thoughts on "The Obligation of Being an Officer":

. . .we, as officers of the army, are not only members of the oldest of honorable professions, but are also the modern representatives of the demi-gods and heroes of antiquity.

Back of us stretches a line of men whose acts of valor, of self-sacrifice and of service have been the theme of song and story since long before recorded history began. . . .

In the days of chivalry--the golden age of our profession--knights-officers were noted as well for courtesy and gentleness of behavior, as for death-defying courage. . . . From their acts of courtesy and benevolence was derived the word, now pronounced as one, Gentle Man. . . . Let us be GENTLE. That is, courteous and considerate of the rights of others. Let us be MEN. That is, fearless and untiring in doing our duty as we see it.

. . .our calling is most ancient and like all other old things it has amassed through the ages certain customs and traditions which decorate and ennoble it, which render beautiful the otherwise prosaic occupation of being professional men-at-arms: Killers.

--Contributed by MHRC Staff

Source: The Patton Papers, volume I.



US Army Military History Research Collection



HAS ANYONE HEARD FROM CARTHAGE LATELY?

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

October 20, 1975

Submitted by LTC James E. Shelton, AWC Class of 1976

No. 30

SOME 2176 YEARS AGO (201 BC), HANNIBAL OF CARTHAGE WITNESSED THE UTTER DESTRUCTION BY ROME OF THE GREAT CENTER OF THE CARTHAGINIAN EMPIRE, CARTHAGE ITSELF. THIS WAS THE HANNIBAL WHO HAD MADE A SOLEMN OATH TO HIS FATHER WHILE ONLY A BOY THAT HE WOULD DESTROY ROME, THE OTHER SUPERPOWER OF THE DAY. THIS WAS THE HANNIBAL WHO HAD MARCHED HIS ARMY OF 100,000 MEN, MANY PACK ANIMALS, AND APPROXIMATELY 40 ELEPHANTS FROM NORTHEASTERN SPAIN, ACROSS GAUL AND THE RHONE RIVER, THROUGH THE ALPS AND THE APENNINES (LOSING 40,000 MEN ALONG THE WAY, LARGELY FROM THE RIGORS). HE HAD DEFEATED THE OVERWHELMING NUMBERS OF ROME AT LAKE TRASIMENE IN 217 BC AND HAD VIRTUALLY DESTROYED THE ROMAN ARMY AT CANNÆ A YEAR LATER, THOUGH OUTNUMBERED BY OVER 2 TO 1. FOR OVER 15 YEARS HIS ACTIONS GENERATED A PERENNIAL CRY OF FEAR IN ROME ITSELF: "HANNIBAL AD PORTAS--HANNIBAL IS AT THE GATES." MEANWHILE SCIPIO AFRICANUS, THE GREAT ROMAN MILITARY GENIUS WHO HAD SOMEHOW SURVIVED THE BATTLE OF CANNÆ AS A RELATIVELY JUNIOR OFFICER, HAD CONQUERED THE RICH CARTHAGINIAN COLONIES IN IBERIA AND SUBSEQUENTLY INVADED AFRICA TO DESTROY CARTHAGE. HANNIBAL RETURNED TO CARTHAGE, ONLY TO FIND THAT SELF-INDULGENCE AND DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY HAD LULLED ITS CITIZENS INTO SELF AGGRANDIZEMENT AND CORRUPTION. HE WAS DEFEATED BY SCIPIO AT ZAMA, AND THE CARTHAGINIAN SENATE SUED FOR PEACE. THE TERMS OF THE PEACE INCLUDED THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE CARTHAGINIAN WAR-MAKING POTENTIAL AND STAGGERING INDEMNITIES TO BE PAID TO ROME. STRIPPED OF HIS POWER BY VACILLATING FACTIONS IN THE CARTHAGINIAN SENATE, HANNIBAL WAS ACCUSED OF LAUGHING AS THE SENATORS AND POPULACE WEPT WHEN RAISING THE FIRST INDEMNITY PAYMENTS TO ROME. HE SPOKE THESE WORDS:

The time to weep was when our arms were taken away from us, our ships were burnt, and we were forbidden foreign wars; that was when we received our death blow. You have no reason to believe that the Romans had any interest in your domestic peace, for peace can never stay long in a great country. It will find an enemy at home if it lacks one abroad, just as a powerful body appears immune from any external infection but is strained by its own strength. How true it is that we feel public misfortune only in so far as it affects our private interests! And it takes money loss to make us feel the pinch. So when the spoils of war were being stripped from vanquished Carthage, and you saw her left naked and unarmed amidst all the many armed tribes of Africa, no one raised a moan; but today, when contributions have to be made from private property, you behave like mourners at your country's funeral. All too soon, I fear, you will realize that it is the least of your troubles which has called forth these tears today.

SOURCE: LIVY, THE WAR WITH HANNIBAL and THE EARLY HISTORY OF ROME

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LIVY'S POSTSCRIPT: "I SHALL FIND ANTIQUITY A REWARDING STUDY, IF ONLY BECAUSE WHILE I AM ABSORBED IN IT, I SHALL BE ABLE TO TURN MY EYES FROM THE TROUBLES WHICH FOR SO LONG HAVE TORMENTED THE MODERN WORLD. . . ."



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY November 3, 1975
No. 31

THE INTERNATIONAL GUN

In the hot summer month of June, 1900, the Boxer Rebellion erupted full force in eastern China. Trapped in the legation quarter of the capital city of Peking were the diplomatic and commercial representatives and a small force of military personnel essentially comprising the augmented legation guard detachments--a mélange of soldiers, sailors, and marines of nine countries.

Besieged and under constant fire from the fanatical Boxers and the Imperial Chinese Army, the small military force was thrown on its own devices to defend itself and its civilian charges until relief would occur in mid-July. The little force was woefully short on artillery, having but one or two pieces of small calibers.

In a masterful display of "field expedient" improvisation, the soldiers of several of the besieged legations put their heads together and "made" a field-piece. According to one historian: "The Russians had brought some cannon shells up with them /but no cannon/. . . The defenders . . . found an old 1860 British muzzle-loading cannon which, with some adaptation, could be made to fire the shells. They fitted wheels to it from an Italian ammunition truck, and an American gunner put it all together. So, they called the gun International and put it into position to knock down some of the Chinese barricades."

Presumably "Old International" was still principal "spokesman" for the legations when the 14th U.S. Infantry scaled the walls of the Imperial City on 14 July to raise the siege.

SOURCE: Christopher Martin, The Boxer Rebellion, p. 91.

Contributed by Colonel James Barron Agnew



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

November 17, 1975

No. 32

UNFAIR TRADE AGREEMENT

Coffee and hardtack became the Civil War soldier's staple diet, and hungry soldiers naturally used their wits in obtaining a sufficient amount of either or both to satisfy a craving stomach. Sergeant Charles McKay of Co. C, 154th New York State Volunteer Infantry left to history a vivid account of how one group of soldiers tried to remedy the Commissary Department's scant ration allowance.

The German members of the 27th and 73d Pa. were very fond of coffee, and the amount furnished them by the Commissary did not fully meet their wants, while the generous supply of hard bread, or "hardtack" was rather more than they cared for. In our regiment the exact opposite was the case, we did not use all the coffee, but our "ration" of hardtack disappeared quickly and left a sincere desire for more. Under this condition of things there quickly grew a great trade between the regiments, we giving our surplus coffee for their hardtack. This was all right and legitimate until some of our boys of Yankee proclivities saw a chance of getting the best of the bargain, which they accomplished by saving all the coffee grounds after using and carefully drying them and placing them in a sack. When a sufficient quantity was obtained they were carried over to the unsuspecting Germans and traded for good hardtack. Of course it did not take long for the Teutons to discover that their much loved beverage had lost most of its flavor, and they were not slow in discovering the cause. They immediately named us the "hardtacks." When we passed their camp either singly or in a body they would turn out and yell, "Hardtacks!" as loud as their lungs would allow. I have always suspected that they applied this title to us as a sort of reproach, thereby intimating that we were in some way hard customers. But our boys always took it in good part and invariably answered their cry with the one word, "Coffee."

However, Sergeant McKay did not leave to history whether the Germans continued trading with the deceitful York State boys.

SOURCE: Winey Coll., MHRC

Submitted by Michael J. Winey



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

No. 33

Contributed by Dr. Laszlo M. Alföldi

December 1, 1975

UNMUZZLING THE MILITARY

Feldzeugmeister Anton Galgötzy (1837-1929), a corps commander in the Austro-Hungarian Army, was one of the most colorful, respected and liked generals of the turn of the century Habsburg Forces. He was a commoner, an outspoken country boy with magnificent humor and wit, which often ridiculed bureaucrats and even archdukes. He cared for his men, and because of his fatherly understanding of the common soldier's problems, he earned the nickname "Father of the Army." Galgötzy soon became a legend, and the numerous anecdotes about his deeds were the favorite subjects of pastime chats in the barracks as well as in the cafes and casinos of Vienna and Budapest. Two most characteristic of him are as follows:

In 1887 Galgötzy was stationed in Herzegovina. In order to improve his communication and supply lines he requested and received from Vienna 3000 Guldens to construct a new road. After the road was completed, the War Ministry requested an accounting of the money. Galgötzy, who could not stand the pedantic Viennese bureaucracy, sent back this short reply: "Received 3000 Guldens, spent 3000 Guldens, the remainder is zero. (signed) Galgötzy." Such unusual accounting, however, was not acceptable in Vienna, and the War Minister ordered Galgötzy to present a detailed accounting of the money. Galgötzy's answer, on an ordinary page of note book paper, was even more out of line. It read: "I stole nothing; who does not believe it is an Ass. (signed) Galgötzy." This reply, of course, caused a storm in the War Ministry, and the bureaucrats brought the matter before the Emperor himself. Franz Joseph, who knew the honest, straight forward character of Galgötzy well, read the note, smiled, and remarked to his aide (a lieutenant-general), "Excellency, do you believe this? I do!"

In the 1907 Austro-Hungarian maneuvers in Galicia, several Habsburg archdukes took part as division commanders. One of them made a grotesque error, for which anyone other than a member of the imperial family would have been demoted or sent into retirement. After the maneuvers General Galgötzy, the commander of the exercises, made the following remark to the archduke at the officers debriefing: "Your Imperial Highness, there were two sensible solutions to the problem. You, however, chose a third one. Thank you, gentlemen."

Source: Alföldi, Laszlo M. Die Generale magyarischer Nationalität im k.u.k. Heer von 1890 bis 1914. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Innsbruck, Austria, 1970.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Randy W. Hackenburg

December 15, 1975

No. 34

HARDTACK INSURRECTION

EARLY IN 1861, AS TROOPS FROM THROUGHOUT THE NORTH FLOCKED TO THE DEFENSE OF THEIR NATION, MANY OF THE SOLDIERS FOUND THAT THEIR NEW OCCUPATION WAS NOT AS PLEASANT AS THEY HAD HOPED IT WOULD BE. ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ADJUSTMENTS TO MAKE WAS TO ARMY CHOW. ON 19 MAY 1861 WILLIAM ROBERTS, 1st CORPL. IN CO. H, 11th PA. VOLUNTEERS (3 MONTHS), WROTE THIS LETTER TO A FRIEND IN DANVILLE, PA. THE REGIMENT WAS THEN STATIONED AT CAMP WAYNE, NEAR WEST CHESTER, PA.

Dear Friend: --The men in our company are enjoying the best of health, considering the shameful manner in which we have been treated for the last few days. There has been great excitement and confusion in camp, caused by the commissary furnishing but one hundred and ninety-nine hard crackers for seventy-seven men, for one day's rations, with fat pork and green coffee; no sugar, pepper, potatoes, & c. Every man in the Eleventh swears he will serve no longer than the three months for which they enlisted.

The above rations were served out Friday morning, and as a consequence, not one of the men would turn out to drill, nor would they eat them. During the day, the regiment paraded the ground, some having nothing on but their drawers and others with their "haversacks" on, while numbers had papers pinned on their backs, which read "bread or blood!" and "we are bound for Texas," & c. After marching awhile thus, the Colonel arrived, and attempted to place two of our boys in the "guard house." --As he was putting them in, the whole crowd, some seven or eight hundred men, threw the crackers at him, when, I can assure you, he was glad to leave. By this time the commissary arrived, when he met with a similar reception. A string of crackers was thrown around the neck of his horse, and he was forced to leave Camp. So we had nothing to eat during the whole day, as the crackers had been thrown away!

Yesterday morning came and more crackers, as usual. . . . At nine o'clock in the morning, the Eleventh Regiment came to the gate and said they were bound to go out and get their breakfast, whatever the consequences might be. . . . Having caught the commissary in town, they threatened to hang him should he attempt to furnish them with crackers again. He jumped through a window and disappeared, stating, however, before he left, that he would not furnish them with any more. . . . This morning we had fresh bread and beef for breakfast, and the Camp is getting a little quiet again. . . . Now if the Government is worth sustaining, the soldiers should be better fed.

SOURCE: Danville Intelligencer, May 31, 1861.



US Army Military History Research Collection

SILVER MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD?



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by LTC Harry E. Soyster

December 29, 1975

No. 35

GOLD! GOLD! Kings have fought for it; farmers and storekeepers have "rushed" for it; and athletes since the Greeks have run for it. Silver has never conjured the same emotions since it has always been of significantly less value (one sixteenth that of gold at present). As a result, silver has traditionally designated second place and gold first. Why then do majors and second lieutenants wear gold and their superiors wear the same rank insignia in silver?

The answer lies in the development of our current insignia of rank, which parallels the evolution of the uniform from the bright and fancy "continentals" to the khaki and olive drab "doughboys" of World War I. This development maintained the distinction between field grade (COL, LTC, & MAJ) and company grade (CPT, 1LT, & 2LT) officers. Field grade officers of the early Nineteenth Century wore different hats, sleeve ornamentation, and numbers of buttons to distinguish them from company grade officers. Their epaulettes had longer and larger fringe than company grade epaulettes, so it was necessary only to distinguish among field grade ranks and then among company grade ranks. The eagle, oak leaf, and bar were introduced in 1835, but whether they were gold or silver depended on branch and type of uniform (example: a LTC of infantry wore a silver oak leaf, as did a MAJ of artillery, if they were in "frock coat"). By the 1850's rank devices on epaulettes had evolved to be:

FIELD GRADE EPAULETTE

COL - Silver Eagle
LTC - Silver Oak Leaf
MAJ - Plain

COMPANY GRADE EPAULETTE

CPT - 2 Silver Bars
1LT - 1 Silver Bar
2LT - Plain

All rank was shown in silver, and the rank of MAJ and 2LT was simply shown by the wearing of the appropriate field grade or company grade epaulettes without rank insignia.

Shoulder straps like those worn on the current dress blue uniform were introduced prior to the Civil War and almost entirely replaced the epaulette by 1861. On the shoulder strap a major was given a gold oak leaf since he no longer had epaulette fringe to distinguish him from the 2LT. By 1872, shoulder knots had replaced epaulettes on most dress uniforms; only general officers were still entitled to wear epaulettes. The new shoulder knots and the shoulder straps then used all our current rank devices except that both knots and straps were plain for the 2LT. It was not until the olive drab and khaki field uniforms of World War I no longer easily distinguished between officer and enlisted man that the 2LT got his gold bar--the date 29 December 1917. And so the gold rank devices (the oak leaf and bar) are "outranked" by their silver counterpart used to designate a higher rank. Perhaps, though, a gold bar is some consolation for a 2LT.

SOURCE: Army Regulations, 1821, 1825, 1835, 1847, 1857, 1861, 1872, 1882, 1888, 1889; Service Regulation No. 42, Ch. 1, 29 December 1917.



Contributed by Dr. Richard J. Sommers

US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

January 12, 1976

No. 36

A MATTER OF EVIDENT PROPRIETY

CONFEDERATE AND FEDERAL METHODS OF PLACING MILITARY MANPOWER IN THE FIELD VARIED SIGNIFICANTLY. THE SOUTHERNERS BASICALLY RAISED RELATIVELY FEWER UNITS AND THEN CHANNLED INDIVIDUAL RECRUITS INTO THEM AS REPLACEMENTS. THE NEW SOLDIERS THUS HAD THE BENEFIT OF SERVING IN THE SAME COMPANY AS VETERANS. THE BLUECOATS IN CONTRAST, GENERALLY OBTAINED ADDITIONAL MANPOWER BY RAISING ENTIRELY NEW REGIMENTS. VETERAN YANKEE UNITS THUS GREW PROGRESSIVELY SMALLER DUE TO CASUALTIES AND ILLNESS, WHILE THE NEW REGIMENTS, THOUGH NUMERICALLY STRONG, REQUIRED MONTHS OF OFTEN COSTLY EXPERIENCE TO BECOME BATTLE-TEMPERED THEMSELVES. THESE FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS OF DIFFERING APPROACHES ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, OFTEN OVERGENERALIZED TO ALLEGE THAT THE BUTTERNUTS RAISED NO UNITS AFTER MID-1861 AND THAT NO NORTHERN STATES --OR ONLY A FEW, SUCH AS VERMONT AND WISCONSIN--PROVIDED INDIVIDUAL REPLACEMENTS TO EXISTING REGIMENTS. IN FACT, SOME CONFEDERATE FORCES WERE CREATED AFTER THE FIRST SUMMER, AND ALL FEDERAL STATES SENT INDIVIDUAL REPLACEMENTS TO THE FIELD. THE UNIONISTS' PROBLEMS AROSE DUE TO RAISING TOO MANY NEW OUTFITS, ALLOWING VETERAN UNITS TO GET TOO WEAK, AND ADDING RECRUITS TOO LATE TO DO MUCH GOOD. THE QUALITY OF SUCH BLUE REPLACEMENTS WAS A FURTHER WEAKNESS. WHILE SOME WERE GOOD MEN, OTHERS WERE SCOUNDRELS, BOUNTY JUMPERS, RIFF RAFF, AND RECENT IMMIGRANTS WITH LITTLE COMMITMENT TO THEIR NEW HOMELAND. NOT THE 48ers, WHO HAD PATRIOTICALLY ENLISTED IN 1861, THESE WARTIME IMMIGRANTS WERE HERDED INTO THE ARMY BY UNSCRUPULOUS BROKERS, WHO OFTEN OBTAINED THEM "RIGHT OFF THE BOAT," SOMETIMES EVEN WHILE STILL IN EUROPE. WHEN HORDES OF SUCH IMMIGRANT REPLACEMENTS ENTERED AN OLD REGIMENT, THEY--FAR FROM BENEFITING FROM ITS EXPERIENCE--VITIATED IT INSTEAD. THE 35th MASSACHUSETTS IS A GOOD CASE IN POINT. RAISED IN THE SUMMER OF 1862, A FULL 1000 STRONG, IT SERVED IN ALL THE CAMPAIGNS OF THE IX CORPS FROM SOUTH MOUNTAIN. TWO YEARS LATER ONLY ABOUT 150 MEN REMAINED PRESENT FOR DUTY. THEN ON SEPT. 2-3, 1864, SOME 365 RECRUITS ARRIVED, VIRTUALLY ALL OF THEM GERMAN AND FRENCH IMMIGRANTS. THIS INCREMENT TRANSFORMED THE NEW ENGLAND YANKEE UNIT INTO WHAT WAS DERISIVELY CALLED "THE 1st HAMBURGERS" AND MADE IT AT ONCE THE NUMERICALLY STRONGEST AND QUALITATIVELY WEAKEST OUTFIT IN ITS BRIGADE. THE 35th's COMMANDER OFFICIALLY REPORTED WHAT HAPPENED WHEN NEXT IT WENT INTO BATTLE, SEPT. 30: We were flanked....I ordered the regiment to "rise up," "about face," and "forward." It moved at my command, and of course retreated in some disorder. The regiment kept pretty well together...till it reached the hollow, there resembling an amphitheater. Here we succeeded in halting most of it with the other regiments. Great exertions were made by my...officers to rally the men and form them on the verge of this amphitheater....Many of my men readily took an advanced position here, and only left when regularly ordered back by me...,but I do not claim that the regiment was of any service whatever here on the whole. The rather dense formation and the want of experience in drill, which we labored under were so unfavorable to our usefulness that but for example's sake and the evident propriety of generously suffering with the rest, I could conscientiously have withdrawn all my men without any attempt at forming them to resist the enemy. THEY DULY "SUFFERED GENEROUSLY" AND WERE SOON ROUTED.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

January 26, 1976

Contributed by Mr. John Slonaker

No. 37

SOME MINOR ATTRITION

Peering into the leaded fog beyond the Great War trenches, poet Wilfred Owen had expressed outrage that bodies, "the product of aeons of Natural Selection," should be "melted down to pay for political statues." Yet 25 years later, wars of attrition were again at full flame. The 20th century has been aptly described as the century of the dead, at least 100 million man-made. Yet through all the storms, the American home front has been insulated from the furnace of warfare. "Don't you know there's a war on?" we were chidingly asked in the 1940's.

Not so in Tokyo. Jimmy Doolittle's B-25's raided in April, 1942, dislocating mass confidence in the Rising Sun military machine. In the clamorous abrasion of national wills, Japanese technology was then directed in retaliation toward the American mainland. About the time of the most destructive fire bombing of Tokyo (March, 1945), an engine of war finally, silently, softly dropped through the trees at Bly, Oregon--the world's first intercontinental weapon with someone's name on it. After two years of study of upper atmosphere winds, automatic dropping mechanisms, bombs, and fabrics, 6,000 balloons had been launched from northern Honshu, November, 1944 through April, 1945. Bobbing in the river of fast, eastward-flowing air, they crossed the Pacific in 50 to 70 hours. No air raid sirens sounded--nothing menacing about hydrogen-filled, mulberry-fiber tissue paper aloft at 30,000 feet. The U.S. public was not informed of the fifty-pound loads suspended from the harnesses, incendiary and fragmentation devices that could easily have been, instead, germs or gases.

On the south slope of Gearhart Mt., near Bly, among the park-like pine and fir, can be found today a clearing that still bears witness to its abrupt, unnatural razing. Rock debris breaks up the grass cover patterns. It seems that on 5 May 1945, Elsie Mitchell, five months pregnant, decided at the last moment to accompany her husband on his Sunday School fishing expedition. As Reverend Mitchell parked the car, she and five youths, ages 11 to 14, walked over to Leonard Creek. He heard his wife call back, "Look what I found, dear." He replied, "Just a minute and I'll come and look at it." There was a terrible explosion. Needles, twigs, dead logs and nameless matter sprayed the air. Then a second explosion. Left were a three-foot hole and six bodies. Elsie in flames, her husband beat against her picric acid-stained clothing with his bare hands. But she and all the children were dead--reportedly, the only lives lost in the U.S. in World War II as a result of enemy action.

SOURCES: New York Review of Books, 16 Oct. 1975, p. 27; Webber, Bert, Retaliation; Conn, Stetson, et al., Guarding the United States and Its Outposts; Mikesch, Robert C., Japan's World War II Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America; and other material on file in MHRC.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Dr. B. Franklin Cooling

No. 38

February 9, 1971

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN?

Secretary of the Navy Hilary Herbert's annual report for 1893 contains an interesting account of the Italian government's experiments with liquid fuel, petroleum refuse, obtained from Russia. Designed to power torpedo boats, this fuel was the current fad among navalists in the early Nineties. Herbert boasted of the superior quality of American petroleum. However, the Russian variety, costing \$12 to \$14 per ton, was more plentiful--estimated at one million tons. He concluded:

It is undoubtedly an ideal fuel, but in the present circumstances of small quantity produced, cost, and the distance from the point of production, it is out of the question for us to use it, unless on such a limited scale that it would be of no practical value.

All this took place before the days of Middle East "Robber Barons," homeland ecologists, and \$1.00 per gallon pump prices!

SOURCE: Secretary of the Navy, Annual Report, 1893.



US Army Military History Research Collection

"The Tradition of True Military Honor"



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

February 23, 1976

Contributed by Dr. Harold C. Deutsch, Strategic Studies Institute, AWC

No. 39

THE CASUALTIES, SUFFERING, AND DESTRUCTION PRODUCED BY WORLD WAR I OVER FOUR LONG YEARS CREATED DEMANDS AMONG MANY PEOPLE IN THE ENTENTE NATIONS FOR HARSH VICTORS' JUSTICE. WHEN PEACE FINALLY CAME, MANY FELT THAT THE KAISER HIMSELF, THEN IN REFUGE IN THE NETHERLANDS, SHOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE ALLIES FOR RETRIBUTION. THE WAR, HOWEVER, HAD NOT ERODED A SENSE OF HONOR AMONG ALL. THE GREAT GERMAN COMMANDER, HINDENBURG, ACCORDINGLY, APPEALED TO SUCH A SENTIMENT IN HIS FRENCH COUNTERPART, FOCH, TO SPARE THE KAISER:

Great General Headquarters
Kolberg, 3 July 1919

Sir the Marshal,

The war is over.

The German people is resolved to carry out the hard conditions which are imposed by the Peace.

The Army itself--and especially its officers--is prepared to make every sacrifice, even the most severe, for the loyal execution of this peace as long as it does not suffer in its honor. Also, a soldier who did not exert himself for the cause of his commander in chief to whom he has sworn fidelity, such a soldier would not be worthy of the honorable name of soldier.

As long as true military honor has any value in the world, both friends and enemies will respect this way of thinking. Moreover, despite the severity with which it has been conducted, this war has on both sides produced examples of high military sentiments, examples which prove that the concept of a military honor common to all civilized peoples has not died.

Being the senior soldier in the service and for a time the military Counsellor of my Emperor and King, I consider it my duty, in the name of the old German Army, to address this letter to you, the Generalissimo, supreme representative of the Allied and Associated Powers; I ask you to intervene for the abandonment of the demand for the delivery of His Majesty the Emperor. As supreme chief of an army which over the centuries has cultivated as a precious good the tradition of true military honor you will appreciate this manner of seeing things.

In order to prevent the debasement of our people and of our Army, I am ready to make every sacrifice: in place of my imperial and royal commander in chief, I hereby place myself personally and completely at the disposition of the Allied and Associated Powers. I am convinced that every other officer of the old Army is ready to do the same.

Accept, Sir the Marshal, the expression of my most complete consideration.

(signed) von Hindenburg
Field Marshal General

SOURCE: Révue Historique de L'Armée, 1973, no. 2: 70-75.



US Army Military History Research Collection



EVOLUTION OF THE CHEVRON

VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

March 8, 1976

Contributed by MSG David R. Collard

NO. 40

Up to as late as the 18th century, history reveals little information concerning marks for distinguishing ranks of the soldiers of the world's various armies. The wearing of colored ribbons or sashes around waists, shoulders, and hats and the carrying of special weapons were the most common means of designating ranks in the early armies. Among the first known to have adopted the use of the uniform for soldiers were the legions of Caesar, who were all dressed and armed alike. In the latter part of the 12th century, armorial marks or devices were used to indicate rank and were placed on the shields of knights whose deeds merited them.

In the time of Elizabeth I of England, a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign, a surgeon, two sergeants, and approximately 90 privates comprised a company. Still no grade distinctions were used except in the wearing of scarfs and in the arming of officers with daggers and rapiers.

In America, with the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the soldiers of the American Colonies were found in want of uniforms. This necessitated their wearing any type of clothing available, creating difficulties in discriminating between commissioned officers and privates. Shortly after Washington took command of the Continental Army, he ordered that badges of distinction be provided for officers. His orders authorized the wearing of red or pink cockades in the hats of field officers, yellow or buff cockades for captains, and green for subalterns, also the wearing of an epaulette or stripe of red cloth on the right shoulders of sergeants, a green stripe for corporals.

In 1799 changes were made in army uniforms and in badges of distinction for commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Worsted epaulettes were assigned to noncommissioned officers as follows: sergeant major, red epaulettes; sergeant, one epaulette on the right shoulder; corporal, one epaulette on the left shoulder. In 1813 sergeants were authorized to wear two epaulettes and corporals one.

The chevron was first adopted in 1821 as an emblem of rank for noncommissioned officers, lieutenants, and captains. However, they determined rank only by the position in which the chevrons were worn. Therefore, to identify officers and noncommissioned officers more clearly, the wearing of chevrons by officers was abolished in 1832.

The army of the Confederate States during the Civil War used the chevron in a manner similar to that of the Union Army. Noncommissioned officers wore chevrons, points downward, on both sleeves of the uniform coat above the elbow, the color being that of the facing of the arm of service to which a soldier belonged.

Since the origin of their use as marks of distinction in our Army, chevrons have undergone various changes; for instance, in their placement on articles of the uniform, in their color and the prescribed color of stitching, in their size, and in the ranks and authority they represent.

In 1942 the army of the United States had 7 grades of noncommissioned officers. The army of today has a total of 14 different chevrons to depict the ranks of private through command sergeant major, including 4 specialist ratings.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

March 22, 1976

Contributed by Colonel Edward P. Lukert III, AWC Staff and Faculty

No. 41a

STAND FAST

ARMIES STILL BATTLED ON THE WESTERN FRONT AS THE ARMISTICE DREW NEAR, 11:00 A.M., NOVEMBER 11, 1918. WORD HAD TO BE SENT TO FRONT-LINE TROOPS TO STAND FAST AND CEASE FIGHTING. CAPTAIN E. P. LUKERT LATER RECOUNTED HOW HE CARRIED SUCH WORD FROM TENTH BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS TO THE 11th INFANTRY: It was the morning of the "eleventh" - nine a.m. - and General Malone bid us to hurry "for God's sake" - catch the Regiment, and deliver his orders. The Armistice was to be effective in two hours and the orders were to "lay off." To cancel all attacks; to dig in and save as many men as we could. Only two hours - no necessity for taking more territory and paying for it with good American lives. But the Regiment was miles ahead - still driving the Hun back as successfully as ever. We took a Ford and chased up the road....arriving at Louppy about 10 o'clock. The Eleventh had just captured the town and were then engaged in cleaning it up....an officer....told me the Colonel /Robert H. Peck/ was in the Church... everything was quiet. We found the Church and was only shot at once in going there. Then I found Reaves who is attached to Headquarters and learned the Colonel already had the dope. Nevertheless, he was up in the steeple planning another attack at 10:30. What the sense was - in launching another attack at this late hour no one knows. In my opinion, no advance at such a stage - be it either large or small, justified the loss of more lives - but nevertheless an attack was prepared - and only stayed by the Hun Commander himself, who, at 10:40, appeared outside our most advanced line with a white flag. He came alone - and addressed himself in perfect English to the Colonel himself - who had been immediately sent for. In the meantime all firing had stopped except for sniping and house scraps back in town. The German spoke about three minutes. He said, "We wish to cease firing and avoid further bloodshed. For the past week you have driven us from one town to another, causing us many losses - but suffering many more yourself. Our Army is in retreat - has been for sometime in compliance with orders. My Division is four miles away - but I am ordered to cover that retreat and permit the removal of our material. This I must do, and will. I know you will attack in a few minutes - one grand finish so to speak, and I am prepared to meet you - on that crest. I have there (pointing) - sixty-five machine guns less the few you have captured in the last two hours back there. They are laid and waiting to stop your advance up that hill. Will you come and cause more casualties, or will you give us a respite until eleven o'clock, when we can withdraw without further fighting?" The Colonel looked at the death-trap of a hill some fifty yards away and told the Hun he would act as he deemed fit. So the attack didn't come off - due to "heavy fog" and I was darn glad of it....we were permitted to visit /the German/ formidable position on the hill. It was true! He did have the guns so placed - and they surely would have cleaned up on us in the event of further hostilities!

SOURCE: Lukert Family Papers; cf. History of the Fifth Division (1919), 251.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

March 22, 1976

No. 41b

Contributed by Lieutenant Colonel George C. Wallace, AWC Class of 1976

HOLDFAST

Captain Lukert hurried to stop a battle. Other men have raced to help start one.

Most people have read about the "message to Garcia" and how the brave Lieutenant Rowan took the message from President McKinley through miles of Cuban jungle to General Garcia. Some have also read about the feat of the Greek courier Phidippides, who ran over 20 miles to Athens after the Battle of Marathon and, after uttering the words, "Rejoice, we conquer," fell dead. But few have read or heard about perhaps the greatest runner in history. He was Sleeping Bear of the Mohegan Tribe, better known as "Holdfast Gaines." This is his story.

The year was 1814, and General Andrew Jackson needed reinforcements to fight the British at New Orleans. His only source of men was the troops from Kentucky and Tennessee that General William Carroll could muster at Nashville. But Nashville was 600 miles away, and time was critical.

After studying his map, General Jackson told Holdfast that he could give him only ten days to deliver the message to Nashville, if the troops were to reach New Orleans before Christmas.

Holdfast started his epic run, November 7. There he was, a pure-blooded Mohegan Indian, running through the country of the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, to bring down a bunch of badly mixed backwoodsmen so they could help a Scotch-Irishman save the French-Spanish city of New Orleans from the British Army. Through the days and some of the nights, his lean legs carried him along the Tombigbee River to Yowanni, Pontotoc, and Colbert's Ferry, and then along the Natchez Trace to Nashville.

General Carroll was having supper on the night of November 12, when Holdfast interrupted him to lay Jackson's message in his hands. When Carroll noted the date of the letter, he announced, in awe, that Holdfast had run the 600 miles from Mobile to Nashville in just six days.

Holdfast did not hear the excited talk throughout the night as plans were made to move down the rivers to Jackson's aid. He was fast asleep by the fireplace.

General Carroll and his 3,000 troops reached New Orleans in time to help Jackson defeat the British, thanks to the lost hero of the War of 1812, Holdfast Gaines, probably the greatest of all runners.

SOURCE: Odell and Willard Shepard, Holdfast Gaines, quoted in Hatchett Chandler, Little Gems of Fort Morgan.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Colonel James B. Agnew

April 5, 1976

No. 42

The Eighteenth Century Soldiers' General

FREDERICK II, THE SOLDIER KING OF PRUSSIA (1740-1786), HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS A DESPOT, WHICH HE WAS; A DISCIPLINARIAN, WHICH HE INDISPUTABLY WAS; BUT ALSO AS A COMBAT COMMANDER WHO HAD FEW IF ANY PEERS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. DESPITE HIS AUTOCRATIC TENDENCIES, FREDERICK, OR "FRITZ" AS HE WAS FAMILIARLY KNOWN, ALSO HAD A DISTINCTLY HUMAN SIDE, PARTICULARLY IN DEALING WITH HIS TROOPS, AND OCCASIONALLY LET DOWN HIS STERN FACADE DURING CAMPAIGN PERIODS. A FEW FACTUAL ANECDOTES SERVE TO ILLUSTRATE HIS FONDNESS FOR HIS SOLDIERS:

* * * * *

On one occasion, a grenadier, apprehended while deserting, was brought before him:

Frederick: "Why are you leaving us?"

Soldier: "Sire, your affairs are going badly."

Frederick: "That is true. Well! Listen. One battle more; if that does not turn out better, we two will desert together."

* * * * *

In a letter to one of his generals, Baron von Kellar, in 1781, Frederick reviewed a sentence of six years hard labor imposed on a soldier for attempted suicide. The monarch thought the sentence too severe. All that was needed in the case, he felt, was to give the man a good talking to. He, accordingly, remanded the sentence and ordered the soldier restored to active duty, with both warning and encouragement to comport himself more rationally in the future.

* * * * *

On the eve of the Battle of Rossbach in 1757, Frederick addressed his troops as follows:

"Friends, Behold the moment when every thing which is or ought to be dear to us depends on our arms and on our conduct. Time does not permit me to enter into a long discourse; nor is it necessary. You know that there is no difficulty, no want, no cold, no watchings, no danger, however great, which I have not shared with you, and you now see me ready to lose my life with you, and for you. I demand nothing from you but the reciprocal promise of fidelity and attachment which I myself give you. I shall here add, not to encourage you, but as a mark of my gratitude, that, from this moment, your pay shall be doubled. Come on, my friends! Courage and confidence in God!"

SOURCES: Nathaniel Loring, Prussia..., p. 23; The Life of Frederick the Second..., v. I, pp. 424-425; Louis Snyder, Frederick the Great, p. 38.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Mr. Michael J. Winey

April 19, 1976

No. 43

Long May The Correct One Wave

Two hundred years and two centennial celebrations later, the American people are still flying the wrong flag for the Bicentennial! The so-called "Betsy Ross flag," that spurious thing with a circle of thirteen stars that people often fly, was not even known until 1870, when dear old Betsy's grandson (who was born in 1825) appeared before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and read a paper which for the first time unveiled to the world a family tradition. This story of how George Washington had asked Betsy to make the first flag has absolutely no valid basis in historical record.

The second spurious flag, the so-called "Bennington flag," has a similar reputation. Real information on the "76" flag cannot be documented earlier than the story of an eccentric old man who in the 1880s, in his last years of life, insisted that it was carried at the Battle of Bennington (August 16, 1777) by Nathaniel Fillmore, his father. However, even other members of his family doubted this story! Many other factors as well undercut the pretensions of the Bennington flag. For one thing, it is made of cotton woven on a power loom - a machine not even invented until after the Revolutionary War. Then, too, the flag is too large to have been carried in battle. What's more, the use of the numerals "76" and the only recorded history of it, that it was flown in 1877, make one suspect that it was really a centennial or commemorative item.

Poor Francis Hopkinson, one of three Commissioners of the Continental Navy Board, who was present when the first flag resolution was passed on June 14, 1777 (not in 1776), and who submitted a bill for the design of "the flag of the United States of America," never got his due, not even two hundred years later. His design was simple: thirteen stars on a blue union in horizontal rows (3-2-3-2-3) and thirteen alternating red and white stripes. No stars and stripes flags are known to have been flown by land forces during the American Revolution. However, many records as well as contemporary wartime drawings (some in color) show Hopkinson's design and others (none with stars in a circle) waving from the masts of American ships, the only place that national colors were flown in those days when the most frequent need to recognize a nation arose through its naval vessels.

Nothing is to be gained from perpetuating these inaccurate legends. One hopes that truth will be sifted from lore and that the correct historical record will be established, recognized, and maintained.

SOURCE: Grace Cooper, Thirteen - Star Flags.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Dr. Laszlo M. Alföldi

May 3, 1976
No. 44a

The Brave Hussar Hadik

In 1757, General Andreas Hadik, a Hungarian hussar, led a small detachment on one of the most daring raids of the Seven Years War (1756-1763). As Frederick the Great of Prussia concentrated his troops west of the Elbe in order to strike the French, he left only a token force of about 6000 men between himself and Berlin. Charles, Duke of Lorraine, the commander of the Habsburg forces in Saxony, recognized the advantageous strategic situation and instructed Hadik to march on Berlin itself. Hadik took some 3000 men - about half of them Hungarian hussars, the balance infantry, engineers, and four guns. The raiders departed on October 10 from Elsterwerda, and after a forced march of 150 kilometers via Lockau, Lübben, and Königswusterhausen, they penetrated to the environs of Berlin, October 15. The surprised Berliners, after one day of resistance, opened the city's gates and began paying the tribute that Hadik demanded.

Initial intelligence of this raid alarmed Frederick. Subsequent word of the unexpected "visitors" to his capital infuriated him. As early as October 14 he began moving forces, soon followed by the famed Seydlitz Hussars, to intercept the raiders. Now he publicly vowed that he would not rest until he captured Hadik, dead or alive.

But in spite of the great Prussian king's genius, this time he failed. Hadik and his troops collected their booty and departed for Habsburg lines, October 17. They succeeded in escaping all efforts to cut them off and returned home safely, October 23. They not only got away themselves but managed to bring out with them 425 Prussian prisoners, 215,000 silver thaler, and much booty and souvenirs from Berlin. In this expedition the raiders earned fame for themselves and strategic advantage for their country. The hussars could not, however, bedeck themselves in their spoils to show off their new celebrity. Not until a week later did they observe that the thousands of gloves which the Berliners had paid them as ransom were all lefthanded! This discovery came too late; by then, "exchanging the gloves" was no longer possible. Even so, the brave hussar Hadik received the title of count in recognition of his daring raid.

SOURCE: Jenő Pilch, ed., A Magyar Katona Vitézségének Ezer Éve.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by Mr. Randy W. Hackenburg

May 3, 1976
No. 44b

The First Anthracite Cannon

In the days before high grade steel became available, artillery pieces were usually made of either bronze or cast iron. Until 1842, this cast iron was made with the use of bituminous, or soft, coal. Very few people thought of using anthracite, or hard, coal for making cannon iron.

During this period one of the chief iron centers of the United States was at Danville, Pennsylvania. Here lived men with ideas who would try almost anything. In late May, 1842, an excellent opportunity presented itself for trying something new. A large military encampment was held near Danville for all the volunteer militia companies of the area. The guest of honor at the troop assembly was none other than the General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, Major-General Winfield Scott. On May 24, the day before Scott's arrival, a cannon was cast in the foundry of Haywood and Snyder at the foot of Montour Ridge. This was reportedly the first cannon ever made entirely of anthracite iron.

When General Scott entered Danville on May 25, ten companies of uniformed militia lined the way and took up the march behind him. The new cannon was fired in salute time after time. During the day the piece was tested with multiple charges and proved itself well. The general paid a special visit to the foundry and was pleased with the cannon. He, in fact, asked to have it sent to Washington for Ordnance Department tests. No record has been found, however, as to whether this was done. The true impact of using anthracite iron in making cannon was probably not that tremendous, because soon afterward steel became the metal for ordnance of all calibers. This incident, nevertheless, demonstrates that there was no lack of initiative in the civilian industry of the Pennsylvania interior.

SOURCE: Danville Intelligencer, May 27 and June 3, 1842.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by BG Edward B. Atkeson

May 17, 1976

No. 45

THE IMPERIAL ARMY RECALLED

The Irish flag our landlady flew over our boarding house in Tsingtao stood in sharp contrast to the swastika emblazoned banners of our neighbors. The Japanese Army, which had conquered the German enclave there in 1914, had returned once again to Kiaochow Bay, this time as nominal allies of the German residents, and our neighbors were anxious to benefit as they might from the new Berlin-Tokyo Axis everyone was talking about. As youngsters of American naval officers stationed in China in the late 1930's, we were somewhat suspect but not plentiful enough to cause anyone much concern.

Each spring we would board a Japanese troop transport at Shanghai for the final leg of our journey from the Philippines to Tsingtao, on the Shantung Peninsula. The ship's hold would be jammed to overcrowding with soldiers, who stripped to their loin cloths and little white slippers as soon as they were aboard. We supposed that the separated big toe of the slippers was designed to facilitate their climbing trees to snipe at the enemy. There was not much doubt among any of us that we might someday become that enemy, but then they were friendly enough, showing us their packs and rifles and toothy grins. The officers traveled with us in first class and occasionally cornered one or two of us and insisted that we teach them English words.

The Japanese Occupation Authority, usually resplendent in gleaming staff cars and spurred boots, ran a tight ship in Tsingtao. The ranks of troops passing our gate each morning would chant on their way to the training grounds. One afternoon when one in the faceless sea of emaciated beggars died near the gate, the Authority ensured that his body was promptly carried away.

The preoccupation of the Authority with tidiness was most evident when the tanks came by. A swarm of coolies would always follow behind, bent double picking up displaced paving stones and patting them back into place. On one occasion something must have irritated the lead tank commander; I saw him flail his arms about, apparently ordering a reverse course. The tanks all turned around, almost within their own lengths, and clanked back up the street, scattering the coolies like chickens. Having retraced his course some 50 yards, and apparently satisfied with whatever point he had in mind, the commander reversed his platoon again and clattered off over the hill, leaving a little cloud of blue smoke over the coolies' heads as they stoically fell back to their task of replacing the paving stones.



US Army Military History Research Collection



VIGNETTES OF MILITARY HISTORY

Contributed by LTC Harry E. Soyster

May 31, 1976
No. 46

OH! FOR THE GOOD OLD DAYS!

IT MAY SEEM HARD TO IMAGINE THAT AT ONE TIME ALL THE ARMY REGULATIONS AND COURT MARTIAL MANUAL WOULD TAKE UP LESS THAN AN INCH OF SHELF SPACE. HARDER STILL TO IMAGINE IS WHAT THEY CONTAINED. THE FOLLOWING ITEMS RELATING TO THE ALL-VOLUNTEER ARMY OF THE 1800s ARE QUOTED DIRECTLY FROM THE GENERAL REGULATIONS OF THE ARMY AND THE ARTICLES OF WAR BETWEEN 1821 AND 1857.

RECRUITING: ...Recruiting officers must be very particular in ascertaining the true age of a recruit. They are not always to take the word of a recruit, but are to rely on their own judgment for the ascertainment of his probable, if not actual age.

PASS POLICY: ...There shall be daily at least five stated roll calls: The first immediately after reveille; the second immediately before breakfast; the third immediately before dinner; the fourth immediately before retreat; the fifth immediately after tattoo....Any non-commissioned officer or soldier who is found one mile from camp, without leave in writing from his commanding officer, shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

MESSING: ...Bread and soup are the great items of a soldier's diet in every situation: to make them well is, therefore, an essential part of his instruction....The troops ought not to be allowed to eat soft bread fresh from the oven, without first toasting it. This process renders it nearly as wholesome and nutritious as stale bread....Fresh meat ought not to be cooked before it has had time to bleed and to cool; meats will generally be boiled, with a view to soup; sometimes roasted or baked, but never fried....Vinegar, particularly in hot weather, is essential to the soldier's mess. ...The soup must be boiled at least 5 hours and the vegetables always cooked sufficiently to be perfectly soft and digestible.

CLEANLINESS: ...Bathing is recommended, and where convenience for it are to be had, the men should be made to bathe at least once a week. The feet to be washed at least twice a week.

APPEARANCE: ...All the parts of the dress will be kept in a state of the greatest neatness possible. Those which are of woolen cloth will not be washed....Spots of dirt and grease, or stains, will be taken out by the application of pipe clay moistened with saliva from an empty stomach. Scratch the place lightly, when it is dry, and then beat it.

MILITARY JUSTICE: ...; nor shall more than 50 lashes be inflicted on any offender, at the discretion of a court-martial.

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